NEWS / A2

Miriam cracks down on absent, tardy senators

WORLD / A28

Texas SC rules: Return polygamy kids to parents

BUSINESS / B1

Consumer prices had risen in May at fastest pace in 9 years

NEWS / A2

Gordon says his TV ad legit advocacy as he's been with Red Cross for 30 years

RADIANT as President Cory Aquino attends a healing Mass on Friday, the feast of the Sacred Heart at the Church of the Gesu in Ateneo in Quezon City.

Bunye memoirs won't bash future ex-boss

By Christine O. Avendaño

NO WAY WILL HE DO it, Secretary Ignacio Bunye, the outgoing press secretary and spokesperson of President Marcano

BUNYE / A2

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Saturday, May 31, 2008 ★★ Vol. 23 / No. 176 www.inquirer.net

Meralco wins TRO

LIVE SUSPECT NCRPO chief Geary Barias (left) presents ex-Army Sgt. Ricardo Gonzales.

GSIS to appeal, vows to fight on

By Dixie L. Lucas, Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson and Abigail L. Ho

THE LOPEZ GROUP HAS WON ANOTHER ROUND IN ITS battle to retain control of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), succeeding in getting the Court of Appeals to issue an order restraining the Securities and Exchange Commission from acting on a plea by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) to overturn the election of the Meralco board.

A GSIS official said the state pension fund would immediately seek redress from the courts, adding that the GSIS would not let up in its campaign to end the "mismanagement" of the country's largest electricity distribution utility.

The appellate court's temporary restraining order, to be in force for the next 60 days, was issued only minutes after the corporate watchdog adjourned a hearing during which Meralco was asked to explain its defiance of an SEC cease-and-desist order directing Meralco to set aside the unvalidated proxy votes of the Lopezes in last Tuesday's election.

"It's status quo on the validity of the Meralco board ... we will be filing our comments accordingly," said Gerard Lubiban, the SEC commission secretary, after he received a copy of the TRO.

He said SEC hearings and directives on the issue of illegal proxies

COURT / A6

Cory: I have energy to go to beauty parlor

By Beverly T. Medrideal

LIKE THE MOTHER TO THE NATION THAT she once was, ailing former President Corazon Aquino last night asked Filipinos to pray not only for her but for the country as it deals with various crises.

Exuding an aura of wellness and looking much better compared to her previous public appearances since she was diagnosed with colon cancer, the 75-year-old democracy fighter said prayers would help the country survive its ordeals.

"We all know the difficulties we are going through. Only through prayer can we surmount all of this," Aquino said at a healing Mass for her at the Church of the Gesu in Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City.

CORY / A4

9-year-old girl tags ex-soldier in rob-slays; 4 others charged

By Nina Catherine Calleja
in Laguna
and Alexan Papa
in Manila

BIÑAN, LAGUNA—A NINE-YEAR-OLD girl had "positively identified" a former soldier as "among the armed men who went inside the bank," Director Geary Barias, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO), told reporters in Manila.

The ex-soldier and four other men suspected of involvement in the May 16 robbery-massacre at a bank in Calauyan, Laguna, were charged yesterday morning with robbery with multiple homicide.

Police identified those charged at the Laguna prosecutor's office as former Army Sgt. Ricardo Gonzales, Joel dela Cruz, a security guard of the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. branch in Calauyan, Jesus Mayrose, Danilo Leroquet and Allan Bayo.

Six others known only by their aliases, including a woman, were included in the charge sheet.

Eight bank employees and a client were shot dead in the early morning robbery. A ninth employee died in hospital two days later.

The family members of the slain bank employees watched as the cases were filed and saw the suspects for the first time.

Leslie Pineda, a daughter of the ninth em-

9-YEAR-OLD / A6

OASIS OF GREENERY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT Built 1,500 years ago, St. Anthony's Monastery in Egypt is considered to be the world's oldest active Christian monastery. Though monks still rise at daybreak to chant and pray as their predecessors did, they now carry cell phones and beat heat in excessive ovens.

Ancient monastery now has e-mail, website

AL ZAARANA, EGYPT—A SPECK of green in a sea of sand, St. Anthony's Monastery in Egypt welcomes those seeking God to silence broken only by the whisper of the wind.

Manila at what is considered by many to be the world's oldest active Christian monastery still rise before dawn to chant and pray just as their predecessors did for more than 1,500 years.

Now, they also carry mobile phones, send e-mails and maintain a website (http://www.stanthonymonastery.org), embracing modernity that has helped sustain the ancient monastery nestled beside a spring where Egypt's eastern desert meets the craggy Red Sea mountains.

But the changes have sent some monks fleeing to a more austere existence in nearby mountain caves.

"There is nothing wrong with microwaves or mobile phones—they save time," Egyptian monk Rafaela of Anthony, who has lived at the monastery for more than 30 years, said through a burly white beard. "But God will ask you what you have done with the time that was saved."

The monastery, which was founded

ANCIENT / A19

US joins Zambo blast probe; MILF-Abu blamed

By Julie S. Alipala and Allan Nawal
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE US GOVernment is helping Philippine authorities investigate the Thursday explosion in Barangay Sta. Maria that killed two people and wounded more than 20 others.

"Certainly, [we are extending help]," US Ambassador Kristie Kenney said yesterday. "For us, we share any information [we have gathered], and our experts could help look at the crime scene."

The bombing yesterday saw a number of US soldiers at the explosion site—the Air Materiel Wing Savings and Loan Association building, which is across from Edwin Andrews Air Base and which houses the offices of the US-funded Alliance for Mindanao Off-Grid Renewable Energy (Amore) and of Zamboanga Rep. Ma. Isabel Climaco.

Chief Supt. Jaime Caringal, police director of Western Mindanao, said the assistance of US forces was speeding up the investigation. "That's why we were able to gather much data from the blast site."

He said the unnamed man arrested

US JOINS / A6

Transco towers bombed, half of Mindanao in darkness

By Michel V. Ucol, Aquiles Z. Zonio and Joselito Badilla
Inquirer Mindanao

ILIGAN CITY—ABOUT HALF OF MINdanao—the country's second biggest island with a population of 22 million—suffered blackouts lasting several hours yesterday after armed men blasted two more high-voltage power pylons to near simultaneous attacks that left officials stumped.

The attacks in Lanao del Norte and Lanao del Sur on the pylons of the government-owned National Transmission Corp. (Transco) brought to six the number of steel towers bombed this week. A cell phone was used to detonate the bomb in one of the attacks.

Since January this year, Transco said 23 of its towers had been bombed in Mindanao.

TRANSCO / A6

Jamby: Aunt's fortune bigger than ZTE deal

By DJ Yap

THE EXECUTORS OF THE WILL OF THE late philanthropist Consuelo "Chito" Madrigal-Collantes yesterday opposed the examination of the document for possible forgery, arguing that would be tantamount to "taking an expert to contradict [her own] testimony."

John Gabriel Remolacio, lawyer of the appointed executors of the will, told the

JAMBY / A3

FORGERY Sis says Sen. Jamby Madrigal in court on Friday as she shows a page from the last will and testament of her late billionaire aunt, Chito Madrigal.

Vatican firm: Women priests still a no-no

VATICAN CITY—THE VATICAN ISsued its most explicit decree so far against the ordination of women priests on Thursday, punishing them and the bishops who try to ordain them with automatic excommunication.

The decree was written by the Vatican's Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and published in the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano, giv-

VATICAN / A7

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

WHAT'S INSIDE

- **4-DAY WEEK** under study to save energy /A6
- **WOMEN HOSTAGES** cited for bravery /A3

Miriam now trains guns on absent, late senators

By Cynthia D. Baliana

AFTER GOING AFTER COLleagues in the Senate who endorse commercial products, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago is now training her guns on senators posting frequent absences and tardiness.

On Wednesday Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago succeeded in installing new house rules that seek to punish lawmakers who are always absent or late, and hopefully curb delays in the passage of bills. The measure was adopted without objection from fellow senators.

On Santiago's motion, the Senate adopted the same rule, which provides that absences will be deemed as a waiver of a senator's right to compel/use the quorum of a bill.

Legislation has often been delayed because a senator does not show up on the date that he had reserved for interpellation. Sometimes delays also resulted when a quorum of a bill was absent because no one who could answer questions was on the floor.

Santiago said that if a senator had to be absent, then he should appoint a substitute senator to continue on his behalf pending business.

The Senate also passed another Santiago motion which provides that sessions will start promptly at 3 p.m. on scheduled days, not waiting for a quorum which is usually rendered only after an hour or two later.

Under the new rule, a Senate session will start at 3 p.m., on the condition that the session will be deemed retroactively valid when a question of quorum is raised, at which time roll call will be held.

"We are heeding Robert's Rules of Order, which require a quorum in order to transact. But the Supreme Court has held that the Senate can change its internal rules of procedure at any time," Santiago said.

She noted that last Wednesday May 28, there was no quorum at 3 p.m., but when Senate President Manny Villar banged the gavel, a quorum was immediately achieved.

"It is a matter of self-discipline. Late senators should not be allowed to disenfranchise when another will rest," the senator said.

Santiago's motions were supported by Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Juan Ponce Enrile and Richard Gordon, who each stood up to denounce absenteeism as a source of delay in legislation.

But Majority Leader Sen. Francis Pangilinan said the late rule would apply only if the Senate President agreed to start a session without a quorum.

Gordon, Pia defend TV ads

SEN. RICHARD GORDON YESTERDAY DEfended his appearance on a TV advertisement, saying that the campaign of the commercial soap Safeguard, called "Laban sa Umang Bacon," was a legitimate advocacy of public health, hygiene and safety.

Gordon said he had been with the Philippine National Red Cross (PNRC) for over 30 years, from the time when he enlisted as a volunteer at the age of 17.

He also used to be a brand manager of Procter and Gamble, the company behind Safeguard.

"The intent and core message of the Safeguard advertising campaign was to teach the general public the benefits of proper hand washing and its importance in preventing the spread of communicable diseases," Gordon said.

Sen. Pia Cayetano, who appeared on the commercial of the product, Senator Edcel Lagman, said there was nothing wrong about any person coming out to public for various causes.

"I personally have my name to a good cause, which is saving water. And so, unless there is a specific allegation as to why there would be a specific concern, any conflict of interest, that can be dealt with on a case-to-case basis," she said.

Other product endorsers in the Senate are Senators Francis Escudero (Lucky Me Instant Noodles), Sen. Francis Escudero (Chevalier drug), Loren Legarda (Lucida III whitening supplement), Panfilo Lacson (Social Cure).

Cynthia D. Baliana

Cops cite women hostages for bravery, cooperation

By Alcuin Papa in Manila
and Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Central Luzon

POLICE DID A 'GOOD JOB' HANDLING the Lubao, Pampanga, hostage-taking incident, the national police leadership said yesterday.

"They were able to save more lives and protect the passengers left inside [the bus]," Philippine National Police (PNP) spokesperson Chief Supt. Nestor Bay-aborne told reporters in Camp Crame yesterday.

Bayaborne said the Lubao police, led by Supt. Silverio Mangilinan, did "what was best in that kind of hostage situation. The earth action of the PNP was indeed what was necessary and what was expected."

On Thursday at around 1:40 p.m., Rey Vigor (initially identified by police as Rey Elgar) took hostage passengers of a Baras-Isuzu bus in Lubao, Pampanga.

The five-hour ordeal ended when Mangilinan, who was negotiating with Vigor, tried to disarm the hostage-taker, said to be mentally disturbed.

During the struggle, two other police officers boarded the bus. Mangilinan fired a .38-caliber pistol and a fire knife, had earlier shot a passenger and wounded two others.

Five women

In the aftermath, Mangilinan told the Inquirer that the hostages also owed their freedom to five women in the group who "completely cooperated" with the police during the ordeal.

Melanie Cruz Cervera, a 32-year-old housewife, stood out in the mind of Mangilinan, Lubao police chief.

"Leslie overpowered by not closing the door of the bus during the crucial moment when we were storming the plane to subdue Rey," he said.

Cervera, a wife of one of the bus company's conductors, sat in the driver's seat where she had access to the bus' control panel.

Unstable

At around 6:10 p.m., Mangilinan parked a car outside the bus. Vigor was supposed to surrender to this car.

The hostage-taker then allowed Mangilinan, who did not carry a gun, to board the bus.

Vigor, who had his finger fired on his .38 cal. revolver, sat behind Cervera, who was in the driver's seat.

"He was very unstable. He was getting more anxious," recalled Mangilinan.

'High blood'

Mangilinan gave his men the cue to move in. The signal, relayed by a mobile phone call by Mangilinan to his wife was the phrase "high blood."

"Vigor pointed the gun to my direction and I moved to pin him down," said the Lubao police chief.

SPO1 Armand Mangilinan and SPO1 Jay de Guzman entered the bus with fire-arms help.

As the two struggled with the gun, Mangilinan fired the gun hitting Vigor on his left eye.

Letters

Cervera and four other women, namely, Irene Isongco-Arias, 55, Jennalyn del Mundo Gienoga, 28, Lorna Barrameda Luansing, 41, and another unidentified woman passenger took turns striking Vigor's arm, rupturing his brachial artery.

Vigor was the third to be released after two girls, aged 5 and 6.

The number of the 3-year-old girl walked out to Chookoo after Mangilinan informed Vigor that an elderly lady with a limp was filing from across the street in the woman's necklace.

Vigor agreed to let her go.

At dusk set in, the three remaining hostages—Cervera, Luansing and an unidentified woman—remained calm although they were the only ones left, Mangilinan said.

When it was all over, the freed hostages gave their statements at the police station and left, asking reporters to respect their right to privacy.

Lt/S&O police chief Sr. Supt. Edwin Margo kisses wife one of the five women hostages.

TONETTE ORAJAS/INQUIRER CENTRAL LUZON

because you deserve the best

TAGAYTAY COUNTRY HOMES 2

P 986,021 cash P 9,369/mo.

TAGAYTAY EXECUTIVE VILLAGE

P2.83M cash P26,957/mo.

CITYLAND

812-3222 987-3333
687-3333 242-1212
www.cityland.net

Robinsons Appliances

Go coolest for the SummeR Treat

April 11 to June 15, 2008

Use your MasterCard for a chance to WIN one of 50 SANYO Air Conditioners!

Be one of the 50 lucky winners of a SA-96P (1HP) Air Conditioning unit.

MasterCard SANYO

FOUNTAIN Breeze
Enjoy city living
at a price you can afford.
30 sqm units for as low as P1.09M*
Come view our model unit. Open house today, May 31.
LOW DOWN @ P44.3K
MONTHLY AMORTIZATION @ P10,321
535-6800
(0917) 812-PPHC
PHINMA Properties
City Living Made Easy

Murder trial vs Lanao mayor, 2 others pushed

By Christine O. Avendaño

AS SHE AS SHEACKRAMS IS concerned, the murder trial against a Lanao del Sur mayor and two others charged with killing an Army captain and his aide should proceed.

The Office of the President through Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita last week upheld a Department of Justice order reinstating its earlier directive to proceed with the trial of Kauld Lanao del Sur Mayor Ansaluddin Mangotara, Lindeding Ampal and Cid Hilongtona Dagalangan.

Mangotara and Ampal are facing murder charges before the Makati City Regional Trial Court for the December 2005 double murders of Lt. Ibrahim Sailan Tawantao and his aide Sgt. Rolland Ibera in Cagayan de Oro City.

The case was transferred to Makati City after Tawantao's family sought and got the approval from the Supreme Court.

It was Mangotara's camp that filed an appeal before the Office of the President, seeking a reversal of a DOJ resolution dated Oct. 6, 2007, which found probable cause to indict them for double murder.

In his petition to the Office of the President, Mangotara's camp said the DOJ and the state prosecutors erred in saying that sufficient evidence exists to support a finding of probable cause and that the defense of denial and alibi have not been proven.

But Ermita's May 22 decision said Mangotara's appeal was "bereft of merit" and supported the DOJ decision to file murder charges against the three men based on probable cause.

"After a careful and thorough examination and study of the records of this case, this office agrees with the DOJ, as the assailed resolutions are in accord with facts, law and jurisprudence relevant to the case," Ermita said in his decision.

Tawantao's brother Ibaddakman said the family was "very grateful that justice prevailed in the Office of the President."

He added the decision would help them bring Mangotara and the two other men to court.

Ahead. WHERE WE PLACE YOU.
The ATENEO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS (AGSB) is a premier business and management educational institution committed to the finest tradition of academic excellence and service. By enhancing management theory with real-world practices in our programs, we develop business practitioners into strategic and effective managers. By enriching management skills with values in our programs, we nurture business practitioners into professional and ethical business leaders committed to nation-building.
Application for admission of new students for the 1st Trimester, School Year 2008-2009 for the following degree programs is now going on:
• MBA STANDARD PROGRAM: A 21-to-36-month learning program for young professionals to become senior managers and leaders in the future.
• MIDDLE MANAGER MBA PROGRAM: A focused 28-month program for employed managers aiming to become future CEOs and senior executives.
• ATENEO-HEGIS ACCELERATED MBA PROGRAM: A flexible and accelerated 18-month program for employed managers wanting to become future CEOs and senior executives.
• MBA IN HEALTH PROGRAM: A 28-month program for professionals and leaders in the health sector.
Online admission is also accepted. Please visit http://gsb.ateneo.edu and click online admission and fill out the application form. For more details email consult@agsb.ateneo.edu or inquire@agsb.ateneo.edu
SCHEDULE OF ENTRANCE EXAMINATION: 8:00 a.m., Saturday, June 7 & 21, 2008
Ahead. WHERE LEADERS PLACE THEMSELVES.
ATENEO GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Atienza stand on NV mining row backed

THE CHAMBER OF MINES OF the Philippines has expressed its full support to the position taken by Environment Secretary Lito Atienza in the ongoing dispute involving the Nueva Vizcaya governor and the Australian mining firm OceanaGold (Philippines), Inc.

In an unprecedented move, Gov. Luisa Lloyd Cuaresma issued a Cease and Desist Order (CDO) prohibiting OceanaGold and its contractor from continuing their bulk earthwork activities for alleged nonpayment of quarry fees and taxes.

This CDO have has delayed the light project schedule of OceanaGold, which was targeting a mine commissioning in the first quarter of 2009.

OceanaGold explained that their activities are simply part of site preparation and preconstruction works and cannot be classified as "quarrying" under the Mining Law and its implementing rules and regulations.

In fact, OceanaGold as FTAA contractor, has the right to conduct quarrying activities and to extract natural resources within the mining area pursuant to its FTAA with the Philippine government and the existing laws.

Chamber President Benjamin Philip Romualdez, in a joint statement, said Atienza is merely implementing the state provisions of the law.

He then raised out the industry's concern that future harvests mining companies and local governments units are having adverse impact on the progress of various mining projects and the promotion of the country's mining industry.

Romualdez called on all local governments to realize the benefits of mining to the host communities and country as a whole.

OceanaGold is the first FTAA project undertaken by the Philippine government with a foreign mining contractor.

LAST 2 DAYS
2nd Philippine International Logistics Expo
Philippine International TRANSPORTATION Expo
FREE ADMISSION TO SUBMIT, EXPO, SEMINAR.
World Trade Center Metro Manila, Philippines
10 am to 6pm
Onsite Drivers License renewal by LTO E - patrol
May 29 to June 01 2008
Helicopter on display at WTC lawn

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, May 31, 2008
Immaculate Heart of Mary
Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

1st Reading: Zep 3:14-18a
Gospel: Lk 1:39-56

Mary then set out for a town in the hills of Judah. She entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb. Elizabeth was filled with holy spirit, and giving a loud cry, said, "You are most blessed among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb! How is it that she visits me, the mother of my Lord, coming to me? The moment your greeting sounded in my ears, the baby within me suddenly leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that the Lord's word would come true!"

And Mary said:
"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my savior!
He has looked upon his servant in her lowliness;
from now on all generations will call me blessed.
The Mighty One has done great things for me,
holy is his name!
From age to age his mercy extends
on those who live in his presence.
He has acted with power: routed the arrogant,
confounded the crafty in their own designs.
He has pulled the mighty from their thrones
and lifted up those who are downtrodden;
he has filled the hungry with good things
but sent away the rich empty-handed.
He has come to the help of Israel, his servant,
mindful of his mercy—
even as he promised our fathers—
Abraham and his descendants forever."

Mary remained with Elizabeth about three months and then returned home.

Commentary:
What makes us jump for joy? What makes us happy? Something from outside or from within? Happiness happens, it comes and goes. Joy on the other hand is a state of the heart not coming from external factors but rather from the presence of God.

Mary and Elizabeth are joyful because they were aware that God was within them just as He promised. It is God who jumps for joy on seeing us as Zephaniah prophesied. God's presence in both women made the baby and their beings jump for joy.

Christian Communications Foundation, Inc. 3/F Jacob St. 137 Kalye Sikreto Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila, Philippines Tel. (632) 724-1644 Fax No. (632) 422-0130 E-mail: cnd@cbcp.org Website: http://www.dailygospel.multiply.com (Christian Publications) e-log: christianpublications.ph (Christian Publications) e-log: http://christianpublications.ph (Christian Publications) Subscription Rates: P600.00 - 1st Class Mail (Metro Manila) P1,000.00 - 1st Class Mail (Provincial) P1,200.00 - Air Mail (Asia, Europe, Africa, Middle East) P1,500.00 - Air Mail (Australia, New Zealand, North America) Send Subscription Orders to: Christian Communications Foundation, Inc. 3/F Jacob St. 137 Kalye Sikreto Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila, Philippines E-mail: dgsubscriber@yahoo.com

Gov't looking at 4-day week to save energy—Ermita

WITH ENERGY PRICES CONtinuing to rise, the government is considering implementing a four-day week for all government employees, official Ermita said Friday.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita told journalists that the idea was being taken seriously by President Gloria Arroyo's government as a way of reducing energy costs.

"But before we make any decision either way the proposal needs careful study to ensure that it will not negatively affect the country's economy," he said.

Among other related proposals, Ermita said switching the government's vehicle fleet to diesel-fueled vehicles from gasoline-fed would save P5.44 billion a year in fuel costs.

A government task force formed by Ms Arroyo to craft an action plan to mitigate high fuel costs would discuss specific proposals at their next meeting on Monday, Ermita added. AFP

Radioman still in jail despite posting bail

REPORTERS WITHOUT BORDERS HAS deplored the continued detention of radio broadcaster Alex Adonis, of dzRH Bombo Radyo, despite his posting of bail after the Davao regional court said he would be freed on this condition.

Adonis was sentenced last year to four and a half years in prison for "slandering" a member of parliament.

"Adonis must be released because imprisonment for defamation is a violation of freedom of expression and an attempt to intimidate journalists," the worldwide press freedom organization said in a statement.

"His continued detention after the court ruling is an insult to the rule of law in the Philippines. The Supreme Court must order his release and defamation must be decriminalized," the group added.

Adonis' colleagues, who helped him post bail, turned to Davao prison on May 26 hours after Davao regional court Judge George Omelio had ordered him released on bail of 72 euros. But prison head Reuyo Tenoso told them he would not be freed until "higher authorities" had been officially informed.

The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) has called on Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez and national police chief Oscar Calderon to "rectify the error" that had "deprived Adonis of his constitutional rights."

The NUJP also supported a request to the Supreme Court by Adonis' lawyer, Harry Roque, asking it to rule on the legality of the journalist's continued imprisonment.

A complaint was filed jointly by Adonis, the NUJP and the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility (CMFR) last month to the UN High Commission on Human Rights, condemning the "criminal" nature of the country's defamation law.

9-year-old girl tags ex-soldier in rob-slays ...

From page A1

player, marketing manager Ingani Parrot, said her family was thankful that the case was moving.

But she would not hide her fury, saying Angay was what I felt when I saw them. I wanted to peel off their skin and throw to them why they killed my father."

Olympia Miranda, relative of operations assistant Noel Miranda, said the arrest of the suspects was somehow a relief.

She said her family was looking forward to the arrest of all those involved.

Dela Cruz, Serrano and Gonzales were presented to reporters after the in-quest and filing of charges.

Chief Supt. Ricardo Padilla, police regional director in Calabarzon, said the case was partially solved but not yet closed.

8 at large

In a press conference, Senior Supt. Marcos Pedit, head of Task Force RCBC, said the filing of the charges was a result of investigation and intelligence operations.

He said Lovegate, Bago and the six others known only by their aliases were still at large but could be traced.

Padilla said Dela Cruz surrendered on the night after the robbery-murders. Serrano turned himself to authorities but police were tipped off by friends, and Gonzales was arrested in Metro Manila for an offense not related to the robbery-murders.

Sufficient evidence led to the filing of charges, Padilla said without elaborating.

But in an interview prior to the presentation of the suspects, Padilla said a witness saw Dela Cruz in the bank when the crime was under way, and that other witnesses saw Serrano in the vehicle used by the robbers in fleeing.

Serrano surrendered upon learning that policemen were conducting follow-up operations in his village in Tanauan, Batangas, and that he was being linked to the victims, added Padilla.

Police had earlier said that three people recognized two of the gunmen on board the getaway vehicle, and that three other witnesses, who were near the crime scene, saw two men enter the bank.

Nobil said a witness was able to look through a glass window and get a view of the robbers, one of whom was pointing a gun at one of the victims.

'Circumstantial' murders

In response to a question from reporters, Laguna provincial prosecutor Prisco Mirelli said the charge of robbery with multiple homicide was preferred over multiple murder because the primary intention of the gunmen was robbery.

"The murders are circumstantial. The killings happened in the act of robbery," Mirelli said, adding that under the law, multiple murder and robbery with multiple homicide carried the same punishment.

Padilla said police were still checking whether those killed in subsequent purported shootouts with lawmen were involved in the robbery-murders.

"I was the one who ordered the anti-criminality campaign," he said. "Until policemen that volunteer firearms were seized, should be subjected to a ballistics test to determine if these were the ones used in the RCBC breach," he said.

Supt. Joy Cabal, head of Scene of the Crime Operations in Calabarzon, said cross-matching examinations had yet to be completed.

"So far, we're getting negative results. But there are still more firearms to examine," Cabal said.

She said the counting of one firearm took a week.

There have been three purported encounters where a total of five men suspected of involvement in the May 10 robbery-murders were shot dead.

Jose Commission on Human Rights Chair Leila de Lima, citing initial findings, said at least one shootout in Tanauan City, where three men were killed, was actually a "tokhang."

Girl in custody

At a press conference in Camp Crame, NCRPO chief Florin presented to Sergeant Gonzales to reporters.

Florin said the nine-year-old witness was in police custody but did not explain how she was found.

Gonzales was arrested on May 20 near his residence in Barangay 51, Southside, Puti Bonifacio, Makati City (not Muntinlupa City, as earlier reported).

He was formerly with the Army's Engineering Battalion and now works as a Barangay Bayan volunteer in Muntinlupa. He was reportedly dismissed from the service in 2003.

Barias quoted the young witness as saying that Gonzales alighted from a white sport by the robbers and was one of the first to enter the bank armed with a shotgun.

Supt. Ferdinand Angeli, chief of the SCIDO Regional Intelligence Operations Unit, said an informant had tipped them off on Gonzales's involvement in the heist.

Angeli said they conducted a two-day surveillance operation on Gonzales, even following him to a convenience store in the Ayala compound in Bel-Air Makati, where the latter was purportedly shopping with loads of currency.

Early on May 24, Angeli's men saw Gonzales on a bicycle with a gun tucked in his waistband. They immediately arrested him and seized the .38-cal. revolver.

He was later brought to the Laguna provincial police command where the young witness positively identified him, Angeli said.

"A little girl will not lie and invent a story," Barias said when asked how sure police were of the child's testimony.

Claim of innocence

Angeli said owner-witnesses were being gathered to pin down Gonzales. He said a companion of Gonzales's fingerprints with those taken from the crime scene and a check of the serial numbers of money bills in his possession with those from the bank were being conducted.

But in a talk with reporters, Gonzales denied involvement in the robbery-murders. "Wala po akong ilusyones, at yung pangyayari ay wala akong alam dyan."

He said he worked as a maintenance man in Makati near his residence in the city, and as a Barangay Bayan volunteer at night. He was in fact at home on May 10.

Said Barias: "We can't say for sure what his participation is, but he was identified with the group and positively identified by a witness ... We just have to get some more corroborating evidence."

The spokesperson of the Philippine National Police, Chief Supt. Nicanor Bartolome, said PNP Director General Avelino Razon had ordered other units to help in the search for the other perpetrators.

"So far as our investigators are concerned, the RCBC case is now solved with the identification of the suspects and the filing of the case before the prosecutors. However, we have yet to account for more suspects as we go along the continuing investigation," Bartolome said in a separate press conference.

Praise from Palace

In Malacañang, Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said: "We would like to commend the police for the quick disposition."

Bunye underscored the importance of a "thorough police investigation" as always, and said the Palace expected the immediate resolution of the robbery-murders. With a report from Christine O. Avendaño in Manila

US joins Zambo blast probe; MILF-Abu blamed

From page A1

shortly after the explosion was still being investigated.

Gutingal reiterated what he had earlier said—that separate rebels were behind the bomb attacks.

He said it was "clear" that "the Moro Islamic Liberation Front's Special Operations Group which merged with the Abu Sayyaf Group in Basilan was making a strong, powerful and loud statement."

He named Basit purportedly behind the explosion as MILF leader Mohsin Mulangka and Abu Sayyaf leader Putuji Indama, but did not say how the police had arrived to that conclusion.

MILF deputy information chief Khaled Musa denounced Gutingal for his remarks.

"This is a serious allegation against the MILF. This is an irresponsible statement. The MILF is a partner of the government in the search for genuine peace in Mindanao," Musa said.

According to Gutingal, the improvised bomb was made of TNT.

"It was the same type of explosive used in previous bombings here, including the simultaneous attacks in the Mega Cathedral and the office of the Department of Foreign Affairs [in April]," he said.

Gutingal aired the suspicion that the target of the attack was the Amore office.

"Amore is a US government project which is helping in the development of some areas, particularly conflict-affected areas. And we know that some groups are rejecting the presence and projects of Amore for the reason that there are surrounding us their plans," he said.

Gutingal said another possibility was that the attack was aimed at soldiers walking around the air base. He said this was borne out by the fact that the bomb had been placed among the baggage of people waiting to board a flight to Manila on a military transport plane that was to take off from the base.

He said it might even be possible that the bomb was meant for the C-130 itself.

Asked whether the target was the Amore office, Ambassador Ermita said: "I don't know. It's impossible to speculate. But the act is inexcusable. I don't know the motive or the details."

He said the US government was hopeful that "very quickly the long arm of the authorities will find those responsible so that we will be able to get on with our work."

'Isolated case'

The bomb attack occurred while Ermita was visiting an electric-fueled project in Tiglao, Zamboanga del Sur. Among the wounded were four Amore employees, all Filipinos.

On the phone with reporters in Manila, Col. Dionisio Guerra, the commander of Task Force Zamboanga, said the bomb attack was nothing to worry about.

"Zamboanga City is still safe and secure. This is just an isolated case," he said.

To some key points, Guerra said that only the other weekend, a summit on global warming and food security with 14,000 participants was held in the city without a hitch.

He said the police investigation was still ongoing, but acknowledged that it was somewhat difficult to pinpoint the attack aimed at inflicting "maximum damage" regardless of who would be hurt or killed.

Guerra said that in view of the attack, Task Force Zamboanga would review and strengthen existing security measures.

He said the city was "a unique area" in that the military and the police had to "share" some of its security force in guarding and installations.

Guerra also said a coordinating conference with the task force, the police and other major military units in the area was to be held yesterday with Lt. Gen. Nelson Allaga, the head of the Western Mindanao Command, presiding.

But MILF civil military affairs chief Eid Kabalu called on the military and the police to look deeper into the bomb attack "instead of issuing baseless allegations."

Kabalu described Gutingal's remarks against the MILF as the "height of irresponsibility," adding that what the latter could have done was to "wait for the result of the investigation."

He also wondered how the police and the military could have declared the perpetrators so soon.

Kabalu said the bomb attack could be part of the plot of a certain party that did not want the peace talks between the government and the MILF to resume.

"We have been sensing the government about this," he said.

The peace talks hit a snag in December over the issue of ancestral domain.

The government insists that the Annex of the Buenavista Tripartite Treaty will be determined by a plebiscite to be held for the purpose. But the MILF disagreed with this position, and pulled out of the negotiations.

Lately, Kuala Lumpur withdrew from the International Monitoring Team because of distrust over the slow progress of the peace talks.

Al-Khobar

In General Santos City, Gil Benito de Leon said the al-Khobar extortion gang, an alleged ally of the regional terror network Jemaah Islamiyah, remained a potent and immediate threat to the peace and security of the city and other parts of Central Mindanao.

De Leon, commander of the Joint Task Force Gensan, said that from luring a bishop-for-ransom gang, al-Khobar had metamorphosed into a dreaded extortion group.

"However, we consider it not a problem but a bigger challenge. Intensifying and preventing this group from ruining the city is among our priorities," he said.

Al-Khobar is being blamed for the series of bomb attacks on bus companies and commercial establishments in the region, which is made up of the provinces of South Cotabato, Sarangani, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat, and the cities of General Santos, Koronadal, Tacurong, Kidapawan and Cotabato.

Among the deadliest attacks attributed to al-Khobar was the June 2007 bus bombing in Banisilan, Davao del Sur, where about 12 people were killed and scores of others wounded. With reports from Nikko Dizon in Manila; Agustin Zarate, Inquirer Mindanao

Transco towers bombed ...

From page A1

Yesterday's blasts also came a day after an explosion occurred near the Edwin Andrews Air base in Zamboanga City, killing two people and wounding almost two dozens.

Yesterday's attacks occurred in Bulalong, Leandro Fernandez and Dimasalang, Lanao del Norte.

The toppling down of the two pylons knocked out power in eastern and southern Mindanao starting at 9:27 a.m., according to Elizabeth Ladaga, Transco communications officer.

Rose Lugo, information officer of the Davao Light and Power Co. (DLPC) in Davao City, said power was gradually restored to some areas, including hospitals.

The DLPC, a company owned by the Alcantara family, used its generator sets to partially restore power to important facilities, Lugo said.

Attacks since Tuesday

Ladaga said that since Tuesday, armed men had been smashing Transco towers for still unclear reasons.

She said that armed men on Thursday also blasted steel towers in Tangcungin in Kauswagan town and in Balabagan in Buenlod, both in Lanao del Norte.

Unidentified men also felled two Transco towers in Balutay village in Aloleb, Bantugan province shortly before midnight Tuesday.

Gov. Miguel Dominguez branded the attacks as sabotage.

He said residents would be experiencing power interruptions within the next four days while rehabilitation work was going on.

Transco communications officer Belinda Cardin placed the damage on Transco towers No. 43 and 39 at around P2 million.

Cell phone fragments

Transco said its engineers were working to repair the towers.

Senior Supt. Danilo Strabis, Sarangani police director, told reporters that bomb experts had recovered fragments of a cellular phone, battery and electrical wirings from the site of the explosion in Alabel.

He said police were trying to determine the type of explosives used in the attacks.

"We're still conducting investigation to determine whether this was an act of harassment, extortion or terrorism," Strabis said.

No plot attacks against Transco facilities, authorities cited elections as the most likely motive.

Major cities in the eastern half of Mindanao suffered up to nine hours of power outs, Transco spokesperson Belinda Cardin told Agence France-Presse, while other populated areas in the island also had only sporadic power.

Cardin said an emergency repair had been in place to try and restore power to the areas affected.

But she said it could take between four and five days to permanently restore the damaged system. With a report from AFP

Jamby: Aunt's fortune bigger than ZTE deal

Front page 61

court he intended to file his opposition to the request of Sen. Rene Cayetano "Jamby" Madrigal to have the disputed will examined by the National Bureau of Investigation.

Madrigal's request was intended to bolster her claim that the will—which left nothing to her and to her aunt's foundation—might have been fabricated since it bore a signature supposedly different from her signature in other legal documents.

No one has advanced a figure on how much is the fortune left behind by Collantes but Madrigal told reporters her late aunt's **estate is bigger than the $329-million ZTE National Broadband Network deal.**

"You'll be shocked," she said.

Initially, at yesterday's hearing, Benedicto wanted Makati City Judge Oscar Pimentel to rule first on a separate motion by Madrigal seeking leave, or court permission, to intervene in the case before ruling on her motion questioning the signature's authenticity.

No legal personality

Benedicto argued that if the motion to intervene was denied, the case before ruling on her motion questioning the signature's authenticity.

No legal personality

Benedicto argued that if the motion to intervene was denied, the case before ruling on her motion questioning the signature's authenticity.

SIGNATURE FAKE Lawyer Garry Glennon shows Sen. Jamby Madrigal the documents purportedly bearing a fake signature of Doña Consuelo Madrigal-Collantes after the hearing at the Makati Trial Court, Makati City on Friday morning. RICHARD PUNO/INQUIRER

Madrigal's lawyers, Ernesto Francisco, argued that the examination of the will would "support" their motion to intervene, necessitating the resolution of the issues before the latter.

Pimentel asked Benedicto to file his comment to Madrigal's motion within 10 days, and Francisco to file his reply within five.

Madrigal, who attended the 9 a.m. hearing at the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 146, told reporters the other party should not worry about having her late aunt's will examined if they had nothing to hide.

"I'm willing to drop the charges if they can prove that this is my aunt's real signature," she said, adding: "We don't have to be an expert to see that it's not her real signature."

No better authority

She showed reporters three-up copies of Collantes' supposedly fake signatures on her will, and another legal document bearing her "real" signature.

She pointed out what she called glaring differences in the signatures, including the loops of certain letters.

Lawyer Alfaro Lerma, who spoke for the Benedicto side, said there was no need to examine the will since "there is no better authority to authenticate the will than Doña Consuelo herself."

She insisted that the will was properly executed by Collantes two years ago, and that the late philanthropist had even put in place measures to prevent anyone from contesting it.

The heirs

Lerma said Benedicto represent Petty Fe and Aurelio Montevirgen III, the flesh of the Philippine Islands president, who were both named executors of the will.

The childless Collantes died in her North Forbes Park, Makati residence on March 24 and left a fortune of unspecified size in her will-now, former Negros Affairs Minister Manuel Collantes, Jamby's elder sister Soledad, a grandchild, Vanessa P. Gomez Wanta, and a niece, Gloria M. Gonzalez-Montevirgen.

Collantes left none for her remote-niece.

Madrigal yesterday reiterated her previous assertion that she was not contesting the will for her own gain, saying she intended to give everything to the Collantes foundation.

Vatican firm: Women priests still a no-no

Front page 61

ing it immediate effect.

A Vatican spokesperson said the decree made the Church's existing ban on women priests more explicit by clarifying that excommunication would automatically follow all such ordinations.

Excommunication forbids those affected from receiving the sacraments or sharing in acts of public worship.

Rev. Tom Reese, a senior fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Theological Center at Georgetown University, said he thought the decree was meant to send a warning to the growing number of Catholics who favor admitting women to the priesthood.

"I think the reason they're doing this is that they've realized there is more and more support among Catholics for ordaining women, and they want to make clear that this is a no-no," Reese said.

Apostles all men

The Church says it cannot change the rules banning women from the priesthood because Christ chose only men as his apostles. Church law states that only a baptized male can be made a priest.

Proponents of women's ordination say Christ was only acting according to the social norms of his time.

They cite the letters of Saint Paul, some of the earliest texts of Christianity, to show that women played important roles in the early Church.

Attempts to ordain women priests are highly unusual. But the archbishop of St. Louis earlier this year declared there was an excommunicated after an ordination ceremony in his diocese.

Excommunication is usually "levendae sententiae," imposed as punishment.

Automatic excommunication

But some offenses, including luring others, and laying violent hands on the Pope, are considered so disruptive of ecclesiastical life that they trigger automatic excommunication, or "latae sententiae."

The decree says that women priests and the bishops who ordain them would be excommunicated "latae sententiae." This was the same excommunication invoked against a renegade African archbishop who also broke Vatican rules when he ordained four married men bishops in 2006.

The archbishop, Emmanuel Milingo, made world headlines in 2001 he got married himself in Reverend Sun Myung Moon's Unification Church at a mass wedding in a New York hotel. His union was never recognized by the Catholic Church.

Reuters

MODEL UNIT AVAILABLE FOR VIEWING

429 shaw boulevard, mandaluyong city

Shaw Residenza

725-8640 . 725-8629 . 0917-8307643

TURNOVER 2008

Loft-type residential units with SPECTACULAR VIEW OF WACK WACK GOLF COURSE !!!

RESERVE NOW and enjoy your new home this December 2008!
FROM P 3.5M to 3.9M ONLY

"We build first, Before we sell"

another prime development by TRIPLE CAPRICORN INC.

We welcome well-experienced Real Estate Agents:

-with pleasing personality
-good communication skills
-must be computer literate and
-at least college graduate

A GENEROUS COMPENSATION PACKAGE AWAITS YOU!

Send your resumé to Triple Capricorn, Inc.
429 Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City
Fax no. 725-8659

NONI JUICE IS BACK!

Gov't tax policy blamed for high cost of power

By Norman Bordadora

THE GOVERNMENT'S DOUBLE-TAX on fuel for energy generation is also to blame for the high cost of electricity in the country, Lopez group officials claimed yesterday.

"The Filipino consumer has always been said that the price of their electricity is one of the highest in Asia. What they have not been told is that the taxes on their fuel are also the highest in Asia," Richard Tantoco, executive vice president of the Lopez-owned First Gas Power Corp., told a hearing yesterday of the House committee on ways.

He cited the FG that the government collects for every kilowatt hour of electricity generated by natural gas plants such as those that First Gas owns and operates.

This consists of the P1.80 royalty tax for every MWh and the value-added tax of 12 percent which Tantoco called a "tax on tax."

"This [the VAT] adds another 30.21 to the P1.00 royalty on the natural gas, bringing the total government take to over 102 per kilowatt hour," Tantoco told the lawmakers.

First Gas president and CEO Federico Lopez said: "Most if the royalty tax on natural gas is removed, the power that First Gas delivers to its distribution companies, like Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), would be the cheapest in the country.

First Gas, which consumes 55 percent of the natural gas produced by the Malampaya field, is one of the independent power producers that supplies power to Meralco.

"We have been saying for the longest time that if the government wants to ruthlessly reduce power rates, it can readily do this through the removal of the double royalties on natural gas. We are the only country left that penalizes its own consumers for using its own indigenous natural gas," said Lopez in a statement.

Tantoco said Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have totally no royalty or tax on domestic sources of fuel sold to their countries. He said some even subsidize the consumption of local fuels.

"The ball is in the government's court," Tantoco told the energy committee chaired by Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel Arroyo, the son of President Maria Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Tantoco said the increases in the generation cost tie with the cost of fuel, including the royalty tax. He said the capacity fees collected by First Gas from Meralco have remained almost constant, except for very small annual adjustments for operations and maintenance.

Tantoco also explained that since 40 percent of the price of natural gas is inclined to the world market price of oil, the payments for gas purchases of natural gas plants have gone up by 225 percent.

"When the First Gas contracts were approved by the Energy Regulatory Board in 1997, the levelized price of First Gas was P2.47 per kilowatt hour, lower than the National Power Corp.'s effective price of P2.71 per kilowatt hour," Tantoco said.

"But does oil was selling at $17 a barrel. Today, oil has reached a price of around $130 a barrel. Because about 40 percent of the natural gas price is indexed to the world market price of oil, the gas payment of natural gas plants have gone way up by 225 percent," he said.

'It's legal'

Committee Vice Rep. Luis Villafuerte yesterday questioned his criticism of First Gas and Meralco for "continuing to let and mislead consumers and passing the blame to others" on the issue of the P13 billion that Meralco alleged to paid First Gas for undelivered power, the cost of which was passed on to consumers.

First Gas and Meralco executives said the payments and the passed-on cost to Meralco customers were legal as they were covered by the "take or pay" provision of their contract.

"In contrast, whenever the power generation company mark as First Gas could not and did not deliver to the distributing company the 1,000 megawatts of electricity, Meralco had nothing to take and therefore had nothing to pay," Villafuerte said.

"If nothing was taken, then it is very clear, that nothing should be paid," he said.

Villafuerte also deplored the First Gas executives' alleged attempt to pass the blame to Napocor for the 1,000 megawatts that the lawmaker said First Gas could not and did not deliver.

'P13-billion mess'

"It is deplorable that despite the fact that Tantoco admitted in open hearing in Congress that they were paid P13 billion by Meralco for electricity which they could not and did not deliver to Meralco but what Meralco paid and passed on to consumers, that First Gas' continues to sell the lie that it is blameless and passes the buck to the National Power Corp. for the P13-billion mess," said Villafuerte, who is vice chair of the energy committee.

He said the charges that First Gas could have delivered the power but could not do so because of Napocor's allegedly inadequate transmission lines was belied by Napocor president Cyril del Callar during the congressional inquiry.

Del Callar said that "there was no firm commitment on the part of Napocor that it should provide the transmission line at the time.

GSIS target: 'Mother of all sweetheart deals'

By Abigail L. Ho

GARCIA

AFTER LOSING in its initial skirmishes with the Lopez group, the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) has opened another salvo in its continuing campaign to shake up the management of the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco).

GSIS president and general manager Winston Garcia said he would push for the cancellation of Meralco's "billion-peso investment deals" with its sister firm, First Gas Power Corp.

First Gas Power Corp. owns and operates the two independent power producer (but supply power to Meralco) of 1,000-megawatt Sta. Rita and the 500-MW San Lorenzo gas-fired power plants.

"This is the mother of all sweetheart deals which has to be scrapped if we are to stop the Lopezes of Meralco from saddling us with unconscionably high power rates," Garcia said in a statement.

He said that in contracting to buy power from First Gas, Meralco violated the terms of its franchise to provide electricity on its captive market at the least cost to consumers.

Cancelled agreement with Napocor

"Meralco threw another net over to the main precondition of its franchise by buying power from First Gas at exorbitant levels. It also violated provisions of the Electric Power Industry Reform Act), which tasks power distributors to source power from the cheapest possible generators," he said.

He said Meralco unilaterally cancelled its power purchase agreement with the state-owned generator, the National Power Corp. (Napocor) to allow it to source more of its supply requirements from First Gas.

"If Meralco will only buy from 60 to 70 percent of its electricity from Napocor, the savings passed on to consumers will be a 30-to-35 percent reduction in their electric bills," he said.

In a separate statement, Napocor said First Gen Corp., the parent company of First Gas, had yet to deliver on its promise to reduce power rates.

Napocor claimed that it was able to lower its rates by as much as P1.52 per kilowatt hour in March, 37 centavos per kWh in the Visayas and 34 centavos per kWh in Mindanao.

Down by 41 cents

This year, Napocor said its rates had gone down from January to April by as much as 42 centavos per kWh in Luzon and 3 centavos per kWh in the Visayas.

It also recently filed petitions for its generation rate adjustment mechanism (GRAM) and incremental currency exchange rate adjustment (IRAR), which should result in another reduction of 48.47 centavos per kWh in Luzon and 0.39 centavos per kWh in Mindanao.

Napocor said First Gen should praise its word that it could bring down rates by actually announcing a rate reduction.

Meralco wins TRO vs SEC; GSIS vows to appeal

From page A1

would be temporarily suspended.

The GSIS has argued that Tuesday's election of the Meralco board was tainted by illegalities in the process and that the final vote would have given the GSIS majority control if the illegal proxies were excluded.

The same new pension fund, which owns 23 percent of Meralco, wants to shake up the management because it believes its majority stockholders, the Lopez family, have not done enough to bring down electricity prices.

The Lopez group retained majority control of the 11 person board in last Tuesday's vote.

GSIS legal counsel Estrella Elamparo said the GSIS would comply with the appellate court order even as it filed an urgent motion for reconsideration with the Court of Appeals.

"The GSIS follows all legal orders whether they be adverse or favorable to it. I wish the Lopezes can say the same when they defied a lawful order of the SEC in relation to Meralco's share buyback scheme," Elamparo said in a statement.

"Let the records show, they would try to delay everything," said Elamparo.

She said that even as the SEC hearing was going on, word was already going around that a TRO was being issued and that "libelous lawyers were already on their way to give [the SEC] a copy of it."

Playing for time

The TRO however failed to stop the SEC hearing. Even then, Meralco won a temporary reprieve from the SEC which gave the firm three days to explain why it should not be cited for contempt for violating a cease-and-desist order.

Meralco thereafter filed a hearing, there was talk that the appellate court had already issued a TRO enough it had yet to be officially served. GSIS lawyers urged that the hearing proceed while Meralco lawyers played for time, arguing that the SEC had not yet "acquired jurisdiction" over the case since the respondents, senior Meralco officials, had not been served the proper summons.

Meralco lawyers said the TRO would override the SEC's order for them to make a manifestation with the regulator on its new chair.

Elamparo said all legal remedies are available to the GSIS in seeking for redress at Meralco, including the intervention of the appellate court and the Supreme Court.

"Ultimately, the GSIS believes in fighting for what is right, in fighting for the cause of long-suffering Meralco customers and in protecting Meralco shareholders from corporate malpractices such as those rampant at Meralco under the Lopezes," she said.

"Meralco cannot hide in the club forever. The GSIS has yet to convene stockholders actions against consumers in the spotlight and the people can now see through their falsehoods," she said.

Customers' deposits

In a related development, Meralco yesterday denied allegations made the other day by the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms (Nasecore) that it had misappropriated part of the interest from customers' meter and bill deposits estimated to reach almost P11 billion.

Nasecore has filed with the justice department a criminal complaint for "syndicated estafa" against the Meralco board for allegedly declaring as income P800 million in customers' money.

The amount represents 4 percent of the customers' deposits which Meralco had put down as "interest and other income accrued" in its Dec. 31, 2008, financial statements.

Nasecore said this constituted misappropriation because this effectively converted the money belonging to Meralco's customers into corporate profits or income of Meralco shareholders.

Meralco claimed that a similar case was filed by a customer with the SEC which issued a decision last January dismissing the complaint.

Citing the SEC decision, Meralco said it was absolved of the misappropriation charges as it "simply followed the directive to its audited financial statements of the details and basis for the adjustment."

Refund mechanics

Meralco also said that the Energy Regulatory Commission has yet to issue the mechanics for the refund of the

LAWYERS IN ACTION: Legal counsels Robert Guevarra of SEC and Estrella Elamparo of GSIS exchange a few words before yesterday's public hearing at the SEC. NOEL ANGELES

customers' meter and bill deposits which Meralco is obligated to return under new ERC regulations.

These are to be issued guidelines would clarify the appropriate interest rates for both the meter and bill deposits applicable for specific periods, Meralco said.

Meralco also said that it was never required or place its collected meter and bill deposits in a trust fund, as the Nasecore claimed.

Interest earning

It said that the state regulator had ruled in 1995 that the collection of the meter deposit was appropriate "to offset Meralco some relief so it can use the meter deposits for purposes of purchasing and installing new meters or replacing defective meters."

It explained that the bill deposit, which is equivalent to one month's bill of the customer, is intended to guarantee payment of monthly bills.

"Both deposits earn interest at the rate prescribed by the regulator. In fact, other private distribution utilities were allowed to collect meter deposits ahead of Meralco," it said.

In 1983 decision allowing Meralco to collect meter deposits was carried over into the Energy Regulatory Board, the predecessor of the ERC, in 1998.

Obliged to return deposits

Meralco said that its only obligation with regard to the 1983 and 1995 decisions was to return the meter and bill deposits upon the termination of the contract of service with the customer, with payment of interest at the prevailed rate.

The ERC subsequently ruled that these meter deposits are to be refunded but has yet to issue the guidelines for the refund.

ERC chair Rodolfo Albano said a house energy committee hearing last Thursday that the regulator was already finalizing the draft guidelines for the refund, incorporating inputs from Meralco, which he said would be released next week.

Cory: I have energy to go to beauty parlor

From page A1

Aquino told reporters she was responding well to chemotherapy and she still had the energy to go on short runs in the two times a week he entertained visitors in her office or to go to a beauty parlor.

'Doctors very positive'

It was Aquino's third brazen public appearance since her family broke the news of her illness on March 24.

"It bore the absence is doing too good. The doctors are very positive," said Aquino, who was accompanied to the Manila hotel suite by Sen. Kiko "Noynoy" Aquino III, and her grandson, Jiggy Aquino Cruz.

She said she was feeling much better and her health was "improving slowly."

She said doctors had told her that her blood was checked that she was responding very well to treatment.

"My blood work is okay. Eating is large appetite [so Cory's appetite does is lacking]," she said.

In a speech following the Mass, Aquino again expressed gratitude to numerous Filipinos praying for her as she battles the big "C."

'Who can be luckier than I?'

She said that at the midst of her difficult times, knowing that Filipinos were praying for her gave her enough energy to carry on.

"I've had good days, but on the days when I'm not feeling all that well, what keeps me going is the thought that thousands of Filipinos are praying for me," Aquino said.

"Who can be luckier than I to have so many praying for me," she added.

Fatima's intercession

The Mass at the Ateneo last night was the fifth and last healing Mass for the former President. The series of novena Masses was for the intercession of Our Lady of Fatima for her full recovery.

Last night's Mass was concelebrated by Jesus Bishop Luis Antonio Tagle and Aquino's spiritual adviser, Jesuit priest Fr. Catalino Arevalo.

Bunye memoirs won't bash future ex-boss

From page A1

gal-Arroyo, has plans to write about what it's like in Malacañang.

But unlike the controversial book of the executive spokesperson of US President George W. Bush, Bunye's memoir will not be critical of his soon-to-be ex-boss.

Bunye is to move in July to his new job as a member of the Monetary Board, the highest policymaking body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Yesterday, he said he was "definitely" writing a book about his six-year stay in Malacañang, but indicated that there would be no bashing of Mrs. Arroyo in it.

He said he had yet to read McClellan's memoir—"What Happened: Inside the Bush White House and Washington's Culture of Deception," a harsh roll-all on the Arroyo's presidency—but assured that he disagreed fundamentally with the "recantation" of the author.

'Inappropriate'

McClellan was the White House press secretary from May 2003 to April 2006—the second of four so far in Bush's presidency.

"[McClellan] was part of the team and part of the decision-making [for the White House]. I don't think the action he did is appropriate," Bunye told reporters in midnight parish interviews.

He said "there were certain items" that Cabinet members should observe.

Bunye has been a staunch defender of Mrs Arroyo throughout his six-year stint as the Palace's chief spokesperson.

He claimed controversy himself, especially in 2005 when he pressured media to "tone down" their coverage of the now-infamous "Hello Garci" tapes—alleged wiretapped conversations between Mr. Arroyo and an election commissioner, which some claim to implicate her administration.

'Babes in the Palace'

Bunye said he already had an outline for his book.

He said he would write about his stay in the Palace and "more on the members of the Malacañang Press Corps."

Asked whether he was had a title for the book, Bunye said, "Babes in the Palace," eliciting more laughter from reporters.

The outgoing press secretary has a weekly newspaper and website column called "View from the Palace."

'Enteng' still far to affect RP

TROPICAL STORM 'Enteng' spotted east of Northern Luzon yesterday is not far to affect any part of the country, according to the weather bureau.

The typhoon has maximum sustained winds of 185 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 220 kph, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said.

By Monday morning, it is expected to be 300 kilometers southeast of Okinawa, Japan.

While it was unlikely to make a landfall or directly affect the country, Pagasa said the entire archipelago will experience cloudy skies and isolated rains and thunderstorms in the next few days.

Jocelyn Ga

Aggie department eyes expansion of Mindanao rubber plantations

By Beverly T. Natividad

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE IS targeting a 32,600-hectare expansion of rubber plantations to Mindanao to take advantage of a growing global demand for the commodity.

But agriculture chief Arthur Yap said this expansion will not affect the vital rice plantations in the midst of a world supply crunch.

In a press conference for the upcoming Davao Rubber Conference in Manila on June 5-7, Yap said the region still has many untapped opportunities for rubber, and that government intervention is needed in opening up idle lands for rubber plantations.

"We need only to unlock idle lands where rubber can be planted," said Yap.

The 32,600 ha targeted for expansion will be located in Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, Caraga region, the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), plus additional areas in the Zamboanga Peninsula and Soccsksargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani, and General Santos).

New rubber plantations are also seen being located in the Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan) area.

At present, the Philippines' production area for rubber was at 113,950 ha yielding 604,876 metric tons (MT). Of the produce, 575,004 MT came from the Zamboanga Peninsula while 157,134 MT was produced in Soccsksargen.

Local rubber producers from the Philippine Rubber Industry Association (PRIA) said they are now providing support programs for farmers who might want to explore rubber production.

PRIA president Ruben Mitap Dee said they are currently gearing up seed nurseries to ensure enough farm inputs in the sector and giving training to interested farmers.

The CONVENIENT Way to Drink Virgin Coconut Oil!
COGEL
Soft Gelatin Capsule
Available at Mercury Drug and Leading Drugstores Nationwide
Hotline: (02) 771-1338 or (02) 637-5831
A Quality Product of Tanadic, Inc.

idec
Split Type Wall Mounted Aircon
1hp-P16,500
Free Installation!
Call: 2433910, 2414135, 09177640874

CONDO
Pag-IBIG Qualified
P8,000* /mo.
50/50% 3yrs to Pay
8% Interest
Call us now!
0915-9447537

SAINT MARY'S
College of San Juan
Nursing is Calling You!
Accepting Applications for All Freshmen Courses
Summer Session & 1st Sem. S.Y. 08-09
721-8838 loc. 238 Mon - Sat, 7am - 4pm

THE GENERICS PHARMACY
20%
CHEAPER MEDICINES HERE

HEALTH HAZARD!
EMF=Electromagnetic Field
PROTECT Yourself & Your Loved Ones from the HARMFUL Effects of Electromagnetic Fields (EMF)!!!
This small device neutralizes the negative effect of EMF radiated by CELLPHONES, LAPTOPS and other electronic appliances that, reducing stress, fatigue, headache, emotional unease, most caused by EMF radiation.
Showroom: Sports Lounge Area, QC Sports Club
S. Roldgazpi Ave., Quezon City
Office: (02) 4104123/415-1823
STAY HEALTHY!

COPIER
COPYTRADE
Sales • Service • Rental

COLEGIO DE STA. MONICA
YOUR HOME, YOUR COLLEGE, YOUR FUTURE
BS NURSING
- Affordable Tuition Fees
- Spacious & fully air-conditioned classrooms & laboratories
OTHER COURSES OFFERED:
- BS Business Administration (BSBA)
- BS Education (BSED)
- BS Hotel & Restaurant Management (BSHRM)
- Professional Caregiver (Nurses)
ENROLLEES
FOR INQUIRIES PLEASE CALL:
800-8334 / 882-1277/ 882-4433 loc 24
Website: colegiodestamonica.edu.ph
Address: 698 Nicasio Alvarez Ave. Tahon Drive, San Pedro City

Factory SALE!
A Mother's Day Special!
May 10 to June 15, 2008
9:00am to 4:00pm daily
SAVE up to 70% discount on selected items
FREE 1 pc. Bread & Butter Plate for every Php1,000.00 worth of purchase (cash basis only)
Noritake
The Finest Name in Dinnerware

SANYO
energy saving
high efficiency
easy installation
SANYO VRF - ECO-I SERIES
- Multi-Zone Airconditioning System
- Full System Diagnostic Capability
- Auto Temperature Sensing Capability
- Variable Temperature Frequency Adjustment
Call: 655-2741 to 56-1344-487-8682

Four Saturdays
The Greatest Show in the World
La Mancha Pyro Productions presents
World Pyro Olympics 2008
May 03, 10, 17, 24
The Esplanade, Pasay City, Philippines
Behind SM Mall of Asia
For more information
contact: 817-3074 - 75 or 0916-5115140
log on to - www.WorldPyroOlympics.com
Tickets are available at
TICKETNET 911-5555
www.ticketnet.com.ph
TICKETWORLD 891-9999
www.ticketworld.com.ph

"I wish I had gone to a school like this"!

HIDEAWAY Images inside St. Anthony's monastery founded in 251 AD but the changes have sent some monks fleeing to their comfort zone of austere existence in nearby mountain caves. This monk makes cross-chess seeking God in absence broken only by the whisper of the wind. AP PHOTO

SNEAK PEEK Inside the monastery is the Altar of the Apostles Church located where Egypt's eastern desert meets the craggy Red Sea mountains. AP PHOTO

Ancient monastery now has ...

From page A1

in 356 AD, has survived Bedouin raids, the Islamic conquest of Egypt, and wars between Egypt and Israel that turned the area into a combat zone.

Coptic Christians

Almost all the monks here are Egyptian Coptic Christians, a minority faith in this most populous Arab country, which is about 90 percent Muslim. Most Christians in Egypt belong to the Coptic Orthodox church, which gives allegiance to its own Pope in Egypt, Shenouda III.

Once closed off from the outside world, behind towering, white stone walls, the monks now open iron doors, engraved with Coptic writing, to busloads of tourists and pilgrims.

The monks raise chickens, grow fruit, and lead tour groups through the compound's 12th century church, which is built above the oldest monk cells ever discovered, dating from the fourth century, the monks say.

St. Anthony's grave

Monks believe a recently discovered grave under the church is that of St. Anthony himself.

"When I came here, it was very primitive and totally isolated," monk Athanasios el-Anthony, 62, said.

When he first arrived in the late 1960s, the only visitors were Egyptian soldiers demanding water during Egypt's war with Israel. The monastery was near the front lines of fighting in the war, which began in 1967.

Now, a new road through the desert brings busloads of visitors, most from Europe and Russia.

Only the most gregarious of the 120 monks at St. Anthony's deal with visitors. The others isolate themselves in their rooms or spend their days praying in the caves.

Following Anthony

One Australian monk is said to live in a cave above the monastery, only coming down for an hour or two a week.

Described as the earliest Christian monk, St. Anthony set off into the desert around the year 260 AD and settled in the mountain caves around this desert oasis.

He is considered to be one of the first Christians to withdraw completely from society, living in the desert with only animals for company.

His followers also fled solitude in the desert's solitude.

"I love the silence and I don't want to serve anything but God," says Demadios el-Anthony, a black-bearded Egyptian who has lived for the last five years in the monastery. "My life began when I came here." "We hear so much about the ways and awful things in the world ... though now just want a tobacco shop with food."

The monastery, about 135 km (300 miles) southeast of Cairo, is now attracting as many prospective monks that it plans to turn everyone down for now, in part to ensure that only the most dedicated avoid typos.

Purity of heart

Only about five new monks a year are accepted, out of dozens who express interest, Bishoin says.

"You leaving a job, not finding a wife, escaping family problems—those are not reasons we accept," he says. "We put our novices under the microscope for three years, to make sure they are obedient."

At the monastery, bearded monks in black robes lead visitors through narrow paths between stone churches, monk cells, an austere refectory monks say was built by the Roman emperor, Justinian, and a library containing over 1,500 manuscripts.

'Classic' monks at sunset

"It doesn't matter if we are modern monks or classic monks," says Bawadi, who completed eight years of study with a bachelor's degree. "What's important is the purity of your heart."

The "classic" monks only come down from the jagged mountains after the sun sets, the tourists leave, the chainsaws silence, and only the howling of the wind across the sand can be heard.

Government Warning: Cigarette sm

AILY INQUIRER SATURDAY, MAY 31, 2008 A11

Realtors: Ban on land conversion to hurt RP

By Jocelyn B. Uy

A GROUP OF LAND DEVELOPERS YESterday painted a grim picture of the Philippine economy if the ban on land conversion were to continue.

Poor Filipinos would bear much of the brunt, said the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Association Inc. (CREBA). Unemployment would rise "enormously" since a large chunk of the country's labor force depended on construction projects and power, it would be magnified, pushing the poor to either go abroad or to the "boondocks" to become rebels, the chamber added.

"The land conversion ban may seem a harmless piece of government policy, but it can be the last straw that will break the camel's back," said Cielo Katigbak, CREBA president. Regina Ramona Reyes

Companies, said the ban on land conversion may not the reason to food shortage.

He said it could even lead to another problem—housing backlog.

Citing the government's estimate, Romero said earlier two years, the country's housing backlog of 1.5 million would surge to 2.1 million.

A halt in construction, he noted, would paralyze the "entire supply chain"—from land developers and housing contractors to industry suppliers and service providers, including manufacturing and tourism.

moking is dangerous to your health

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Higher-education mess

IT'S THE SEASON FOR POPULISM. CLOSE ON THE heels of the state's attempt to grab Meralco from private hands, purportedly in order to reduce power rates, President Macapagal-Arroyo has ordered a freeze on tuition raises by state colleges and universities (SCUs) and a refund of whatever increases might have been already collected. She has also urged private schools to do the same.

EDITORIAL Since politics and governance are part action and part theater, the President's gesture is understandable, even commendable. And although it is doubtful whether rolling back the tuition increase imposed by the SCUs would help ease the burden on students seeking higher education, the President's move may herald a new direction that other schools, public or private, may take in the face of the rising cost of education.

But to be sure, the President's order is just a stopgap and, to some extent, suspect—considering the new wave of populism that her administration is riding in what is widely perceived as an attempt to shore up her support from a populace that questions her legitimacy and moral authority as President.

In the past several years, public education in the higher-education sector has been characterized by the rise in the number of SCUs as much as the proliferation of "local" colleges and universities (LCUs) set up by provincial and city governments their autocracy. Could it be a sign of Mr. Arroyo's dependence on local politicians' support for her shaky position and questionable authority that she has stopped short of calling on LCUs to freeze their tuition increase as well? Obviously, she does not want to overextend her political support from the "grass roots."

The growing number of LCUs in the last several years underscores the problem for the President's tuition-freeze order on SCUs glosses over: While government may have improved access to education by setting up SCUs and LCUs, it has not addressed the deteriorating quality of Philippine higher education as a whole in the face of the challenges of globalization.

In short, the politicization of education has only served to make more and more remote the possibility of ever reforming the Philippine education system. In the guise of widening access to education in both basic and tertiary levels, Congress and LGUs have set up SCUs and LCUs all over the country. Except that a number, if not the majority, of these institutions have been exploited by public officials as an excuse to end public subsidy for public works and school-building funds; put their wards, supporters and relatives in the faculty, administration and overall plantilla; "advertise" themselves by offering their names or their kin's as "their" school's name; and perpetuate political dynasties.

Politicians also denounce the private schools as profiteers and mind capitalists. To be sure, private schools are barely regulated by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) that guides them according to their accreditation levels even if SCUs and LCUs hardly subject themselves to peer-accreditation. The sly determination is at work in the President's appeal for private schools to stop raising tuition as if the economist in her is ignorant of the fact that tuition hikes are inflation-driven and owes to the capital expenditures that a private school must make in order to stay competitive while delivering quality education, the better to ensure its graduates pass the licensure exams. This is so because a modest passing rate in board exams is required by the CHED for a private school to continue operating. To be sure, no SCU and LCU has been closed by the CHED for a consistently poor passing rate in board exams.

We must remember that part of the reason Philippine higher education is in better shape than basic education is that there are more private schools in the former—particularly accredited schools with advocacies or "evangelical" targets. Perhaps the government should learn from them. While they are basically enterprises with a social mission, they make investments in faculty and facilities in order to make the grade set by peer-accreditors, the CHED and the market. There is the difficult duty of balancing profit and mission, of enabling a buck or breaking even while affording strong Filipinos access to higher education. Their performance may be modest but, at least, they are measured on how they address and deliver the challenge of globalization—quality education.

Publisher Isaac Belmonte
Editor in Chief Letty Jacinto-Magsanoc
Managing Editor Joe Ma. D. Miranda
Associate Editors Armando S. Invencio
Associate Editor for Reader Help Rosario G. Candelaria
Opinion Editor Lisa V. Ruiz
News Editor Arman T. Camus Jr. • Deputy Night Chief Operations Heidi Pineda
Chief, News Day Desk Ruben D. Almendras
National Affairs Editor Francisco R. Bocobo Jr.
Research Chief Editor Jocelyn Uy
Editor in Consultant Amando Doronila
Chief Photographer Rosa G. Gamboa
Art & Design Director Lyndi A. Villaluz
Board Chairman Marixi R. Prieto
President Ma. Teresita Prieto-Rosales
Senior Vice President for Sales and Marketing Edward S. Rosales
Vice Chairman Isaac R. Garcia
Officer in charge Emily Sonia B. Tio

All rights reserved.
Except as otherwise indicated by law,
no part of the Philippine Daily Inquirer
may be reproduced in any form or by any means without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Politicians as product peddlers

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

IT IS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE CLARO M. Recto advertising a brand of soap, or Jose W. Diokno endorsing a brand of toothpaste, or Salvador Raoel lending her lovely face to a skin-whitening product. All these were once unworthy of the republic, to whom the serious business of leading what Jose Rizal called an enlightened people is a mission had been entrusted. The high minds from with which they tried to discharge their duties as national leaders would have clashed with the trivial and superficial message of typical commercials. They would certainly have been ashamed to see the gracing list of business tycoons, celebrities, nonentities at the effect on the public image of the institution they represent, have crossed the line to commercial modeling.

Today's senators will, of course, vehemently object to any suggestion that they take their responsibilities as legislators lightly. Many of them have agreed to become product endorsers. No doubt many of them take their job as legislators seriously. But what point are they making when they style themselves as product peddlers? If the idea is to augment their income, then they are not only admitting to the public that voters are entitled to tell them to make up their minds on whether they are decision-makers for the nation, or sales promoters for commercial products.

The same storm applies to movie personalities like Judy Ann Santos, Dingdong Dantes and Bong Revilla, who once elected as legislators but have continued to work as actors. Presumably they ran for public office because they wanted to serve in government. They could not have been unaware of the financial sacrifice that entails. Yet they chose to live with conflict between being a public servant and earning a living as a professional actor, model, or entertainer on the side because a lack of understanding of the sources of political leadership. Political office is a full-time job. The employer is the people. No boss has to be who the holder of a public position is expected to give his or her undivided attention to the duties of the office. Nor should he or she be distracted by other gainful employment.

The problem becomes visible as the spaces vacated by the old elite in the upper echelons of government are taken over by the celebrity icons of the voting masses. Looking at the composition of the present Senate, one cannot but be struck by the growing presence of persons from the mass media and entertainment world, clearly a result of mass media dominance in our contemporary society.

Politicians aspiring for the country's highest office know this only too well. Indeed, the presence of Senator Loi Estrada, Senator Legarda Fonacier, Senator Manuel Villar and Senator Escudero on billboards and TV commercials is no more than the flip side of the presence of Lapid, Revilla and Estrada in the Senate hall. What is emerging here is the fusion of the mass media, entertainment and political leadership business.

The social critic H. L. Mencken observed the same phenomenon in the American politics of his time, and satirized it in these words: "As democracy is perfected, the office of president represents, more and more clearly, the inner soul of the people. On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart's desire at last, and the White House will be inhabited by a downright moron."

Such apprehensions as Mencken articulates here often prefigure an elitist backlash that seeks to restrict access to elective public office and favor those with higher education. Fearing unless the state succeeded this kind of reaction, it set up boards and commissions as the creators of a professional political class drawn from various sectors of society. Whatever their individual background may be, the members are to be distinguished by their rigorous training for specifically political roles. We need modern political parties to do this for us, and we are to evolve as a mature democracy. Party organizations and their nominees must take on the essential functions of leadership to instruct and advertise that have been consigned to the self-referential dynamics of political families and the dancing pyrotechnics of the media.

I think of young politicians like Bong Go, Legarda and Escudero as harbingers of a modern political system. It is disappointing to see them take the route of the "stupe" in the age of the mass media. Their appearance in commercial billboards and TV spots as product endorsers may not come under the purview of prohibited promotion campaigning. But it is hard not to see it as a cheap attempt at enhancing political visibility.

It is remarkable that this is happening at a time when the mass media themselves are trying to differentiate the news from advertisement and from entertainment. In media networks where credibility is highly prized, news readers are not allowed to advertise.

Senators cashing in on their popularity as television presidents may improve the sales of their shows, even as they increase their own visibility, but in so doing they may be eroding what is left of the credibility of the Senate as the nation's most important deliberative institution.

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

Education and poverty reduction

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

THE ECONOMY'S FIRST-QUARTER GROWTH slowed down to 3.2 percent from last year's 7 percent, and the slowdown is deepening. The crisis rules some no-quick to point out—the flaws in the Arroyo administration's economic model. Very few of the THGB last year, when it was reporting record high growth rates for the country. Sure not so yet until a word. It would seem they have no problems with the methodology when education is being reported to voluntarily low growth, reflect any growth rates at lower than Thailand's and Indonesia's. But high growth rates are immediately suspect. Since the methodology has remained the same, the problem has to lie with the critics. Low sense of self-worth? Partisanship? Overwhelming hatred for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, such that any success on her part must be immediately denied? Or both?

Let's put that 3.2 percent growth rate in perspective. The latest World Economic Outlook of the IMF projects the country's 2008 growth at 3.8 percent, the Asian Development Bank at 4.0, and the ADB at a little more sanguine at 4 percent, while the Bank's projections are all more conservative, giving a range with close at 3.2 percent, and a high of 4.2 percent. In effect, the government is being more cautious than the outsiders, which is a switch. But it looks like—although it is early days yet and the government's perspective have an advantage not only because they are internal estimates rather than point estimates, but also because the IMF and ADB projections were made earlier—the official projections are more accurate.

Some more perspectives: While 3.2 percent reflects its comparison with last year's growth rate, it is only slightly lower than the average GDP growth between 2002 and 2007 (5.4 percent), and is slightly higher than the average growth between 1995 and 1997 (3.1 percent), the best of the Ramos years. In other words, it is nothing to cause us to cry. Why better than the country's growth rate in the aftermath of the Dec. 1, 1989 coup attempt (3.1 percent in 1990, 0 percent in 1991).

That's the good news. The bad news, as has been mentioned in previous columns, is that the country's growth did not result in poverty reduction. But hold on: It is not just during President Arroyo's watch that poverty has increased (actually, it decreased and then increased). A graph of family poverty incidence from 1985 to 2006 looks like the picture of a grandfather's (or grandmother's) old Dial, light and water account for 7.2 percent, and transport and communication for 3.8 percent) their downward dipping from 1985 to 1997 (corresponding to the back of the stand), and then at best flat (actually, slightly upward) during the period 1997 and 2006. What it shows is that both the Ramos and Arroyo (in fact) administrations are big, for failure insofar as poverty reduction is concerned.

The long-term outlook for poverty reduction doesn't look good either, unfortunately. We all know what there is a very strong link between education (or lack of it) and poverty—two-thirds of our poor families have household heads whose highest educational attainment is at most Grade 6. Well, the education statistics tell how the FIGURE I tell a very sad tale: the net-entry school net participation rates (NEPR)—the proportion of the number of students 7-12 years old to population 7-12 years old—have plummeted from 95 percent in school year (SY) 1997-98 to 79 percent in 2005-2006, an hour high school NEPR.

GRADUATION RATES (GR) have also dropped: for every 100 children who enter Grade 1, only 63 will reach Grade 6, down from 69 children in 1997-1998. At high school, GR have dropped even more: from 71 to 55. Which means, of course, that school dropout rates have increased. Which is one of the reasons why in 2000-2006, for the first time in 55 years, total school enrollment declined (both elementary and high school), although private school enrollment increased, public school enrollment went down more.

This does not augur well for future poverty reduction, based on the most recent poverty estimates. I mean that more than half of those who drop out of the elementary level are likely to join the ranks of the poor, as will more than one out of three dropouts from the high school level. So if dropouts increase (or enrollment decreases), one can expect more poverty, e.g., for purposes of comparison, the likelihood that one who has done some post-secondary education will be poor is one out of 10, and the likelihood that a college graduate will be poor is one out of 44.

Given all the above, the Alam Pantilyang Pilipino (APP), a coordinated cash transfer (CCT) program to help the poor, is both smart and reactive: it gives cash to the poorest families in exchange for school attendance on the part of the children, and regular visits to the health clinic for all the family members. It ties two birds with one stone: it reduces current poverty by giving cash, and human capital to prevent poverty in the future. And it is not a dole-out; it is a social contract, with the mother holding the money.

There are problems, of course—the dangle of political machineries on this the multibillion-peso program is the most obvious and most disturbing. But it has been successful in several countries, including Mexico, Brazil, South Africa and Turkey, to say ours, the best indicator that CCT programs are effective is that the United States has joined the bandwagon, with NYC starting the ones in Depression-era.

This program would reverse our dismal poverty-alleviation record since 1997. Let's not fish this one. Please.

Metro Manila, danger zone

TO ME, THE PHOPHOSIL SURVEY(sic) OF LAST Monday's, SWS report on victimization by common crimes in the first quarter—"7.6 percent of families lost property, 1.6 percent suffer physical violence in the past 6 months"—is that Metro Manila, where I live, is the most dangerous of the four study areas of the national Social Weather Surveys.

Ranking victimization by four areas, for the first quarter, SWS has said survey respondents each quarter if they or anyone else in the immediate family (objective: by moving parties-by subsets also) has been victimized by the following crimes within the past six months: (a) burglary, entering or robbery outside the home, (b) burglary of the home, (c) theft of one more valuables or "pickpocketing," and (d) physical violence.

Out of every thousand families residing in the area, here are the estimated numbers who were victimized by these crimes, according to the March 30-31, 2008 SWS survey:

- Pickpocketing or more: robbery: 183 in Metro Manila, versus 23 in the Balance of Luzon, 83 in the Visayas, and 77 in Mindanao.
- Burglary: 76 in Metro Manila versus only 23 in the Balance of Luzon, 37 in the Visayas, and 40 in Mindanao.

The Luzon national rate of victimization by armed robbery is 50 per thousand families, over the past six months. Mobile-to-upper class (MB) families had the highest victimization rate, nationwide: 90 per thousand.

In 40 quarterly survey rounds done in the last 10 years, the numbers robbed in the street per thousand families in Metro Manila have been at 100+ to 20 survey rounds, compared to only 50+ in Luzon and 70+ in Mindanao. Of Luzon's victimizations in the Visayas, and nine rounds in Mindanao.

Most were the majority of victims of street robbery in Metro Manila (55 percent) and also in the Balance of Luzon (57 percent). On the other hand, women were the majority of victims of street robbery in the Visayas (56 percent) and Mindanao (75 percent).

- Burglary: 76 in Metro Manila versus only 23 in the Balance of Luzon, 37 in the Visayas, and 40 in Mindanao.

Most were the majority of victims of street robbery in Metro Manila (55 percent) and also in the Balance of Luzon (57 percent). On the other hand, women were the majority of victims of street robbery in the Visayas (56 percent) and Mindanao (75 percent).

- Burglary: 76 in Metro Manila versus only 23 in the Balance of Luzon, 37 in the Visayas, and 40 in Mindanao.

Social Climate

Rubert Mangubat

The latest burglary rate of 76 in Metro Manila is this area's second highest in the past 10 years, topped only by 77 in 2000Q4 (Quarter 4).

The poorer the dwelling, the more vulnerable it is to burglars. In the country as a whole, severely stunted 46 out of every thousand Class E dwellings were burglarized, compared to 21 of every thousand Class D dwellings, and 11 of every thousand Class ABC dwellings.

- Extrapolating for every thousand motor vehicle owners(?): 77 in Metro Manila, versus 13 in the Balance of Luzon. There were zero cases in the household samples of both the Visayas and Mindanao.

The four-corresponding rate in Metro Manila is its second highest in the past 10 years—behind the record rate reached in 2007Q3: 83 households in 2007Q2, and to only 14 in 2007Q3, but rose back to 22 in 2007Q4. It was also any four-quarter increase in saving-snapping cases from surveys that I consider the most comprehensive: a 300-percent rise (with the rest). Previously, I thought that there's only liability instances was good enough.

- Physical violence: 20 families in Metro Manila, versus 2% in the Balance of Luzon, 1% in the Visayas, and seven in Mindanao, per thousand families.

In the case of physical violence, the latest victimization rate in Metro Manila is slightly less than elsewhere in Luzon, but both are very much higher than those in the Visayas or Mindanao. In the past decade, Metro Manila has had the highest rate, among the four areas, about half the time.

In Metro Manila, 21 percent of the victims of violence were women, compared to 34 percent of those in the Balance of Luzon, in Visayas and Mindanao, on the other hand, none of the victims in the sample were women. In the entire national sample, all of the female victims of violence were between the 0 and 14 classes.

I compare here to higher rates. I should point out that crime victimization rates as reported to survey interviewers are always much larger than crime rates that come from police stations. The last time (in June 2006) that SWS asked those in the Metro Manila area personally victimized if they reported the crimes to the police, only half said that they did. In Metro Manila in particular, the reporting rate was 48 percent.

Why do so many crime victims not report to the police? The most common answer (about 60%) gets are that "nothing will happen anyway," "we don't trust the police," "there is no use to report to," and "the law was too difficult to bother about." In a few cases, victims say they fear reprisal from the criminals.

Police-to-population ratio: Metro Manila's Eastern Manila has the least Cordoba by each force.

In the photo in the March 2008 survey that "In the past 6 months, people are usually afraid that robbers might break into their homes," 45 percent of Metro Manilans agreed, compared to 52 percent of other Luzonians, 50 percent of Visayans, and 56 percent of Mindanaoans.

Finally, to the probe that "In this neighborhood, there are already very many people addicted to illegal drugs," a huge 65 percent of Metro Manilans agreed, far outscoring the 43 percent of other Luzonians, 44 percent of Visayans, and 52 percent of Mindanaoans.

Metro Manila is a danger zone. Take extra care!

* * *

CONTACT INFO: *www.sws.org.ph or mahar.mangubat@sws.org.ph*

'Ramdam na ramdam'

WHENEVER I HAPPEN TO SEE THE GOVERNMENT AD-vertisement on TV, I cannot help but feel myself caught upon a feeling of disgust toward the people giving the "testimonials." There's no sense of having been betrayed by them. I know that as a government paid advertisement, and I do not have the slightest idea if they were paid some sort of talent fee or any form of honorarium. But I can say, in some parts, they are not telling the truth.

My husband works overseas as a cook in a cruise ship. Contrary to many people's perception, my husband is not washed and maltreated. He now works 13 hours a day—no sub hours, no days off—for 10 months. His contract is subject to change without prior notice, at the discretion of his manning agency here in the Philippines or the principal employer abroad. If the company wants to terminate his contract in seven months, poor us! There will be less money for the family, less food on the table. Despite his working abroad for almost 10 years now, my husband's family and his ours barely never felt the term "money [expenses], which the commercial proclaims. We still have no savings, and no house that we can call our own. We have to rent a house or couch wherever his vacation extends to move from a month.

The rise of the peso against the dollar is a sign of economic growth, our beloved President says. The statement sounds like it's going to break my tambulan.

Last year, I gave birth to our first baby. The thrills of having our own source of financial concern—the high cost of hospitalization, diapers, milk, polio check up etc. I am also employed, but my meager salary is not enough to keep me and my son alive. Because we can was going to take care of us immediately after my baby's birth, my husband decided to take an unusually longer vacation—five months.

I had a happy pregnancy, eating three times a day. I did not have to wake up in the middle of the night to attend to my crying baby; I could go to work without having to worry whether my son was being taken care of well. And in the office room, as I can hear, work, I would see the smiling face of my husband who had been waiting patiently for me so we could go home together.

Of course, it was not all bliss: we had to pay the price. For almost five months after I delivered, my husband and I had to forego buying something for ourselves; the priority was...still is...the baby. I now use my extraordinary budgeting skills to make ends meet. But, honestly, we are happy.

But as days passed by, I began to worry. With more mouths piling up, our expenses were coming down. My husband's previous contract was only for eight months, and most of the money he brought home was used to pay some of the debts we incurred during our pregnancy.

Nevertheless, God has been good to us because we have a princess, a source of joy and inspiration in the whole house. The problem still confronts us: how we can afford her future. I don't want January 1 said to myself, "Good luck, sana nga hindi na mahawan yun. Gow I wish that the contract period will not be shortened)." We need to pay the monthly amortization for the car that we bought. That is the only piece of real property we have and we are thinking of leaving that to our son. As for me, I, for one, all he has to worry about is the money to build his house.

We felt happy when my husband's agency announced a 6,000 increase for the seeks. That amount would help us a lot in paying our obligations and taxes additional allowance for us, I thought. I do not wish the pass to readers because I know that has some adverse effects in our economy, but I hope the government should come up with some concrete and feasible ideas to help the overseas Filipino workers, especially workers like my husband, who are at the mercy of their employers.

My husband called yesterday and gave me the bad news. Apparently, the announcements about the salary increase was not true. They complained to their Philippine agency, but they were told that the 6,000 increase was just a typographical error in the contract. I just shook my head in disbelief. But what bothered me most are the working hours—from 12 hours, they are now required to work for 13 hours, without overtime, or that I just told from jokingly. It's better to die overworked than die from starvation here.

I miss my husband so much, and I know my son does, too. This sad cycle of my life happens every year.

I just pray hard that his immigrant application in Australia may be granted as soon as possible so he can take us with him. There is no future for the Filipino workers; or maybe, it is better to say that there is no future at all for OFWs.

And one last request, please stop playing that commercial about the pay some thing, it only adds insult to our poverty.

Mary Ann de la Cruz, 25, works in an embassy.

Young Blood

Mary Ann de la Cruz

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? Is the new generation really that different from the generation before it? Tell us what you think. Write to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph, together with your address, age and the school, course and/or work you're enrolled in or, if employed, the post. Just send a family and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

Notice to Youngblood contributors

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and/or work you're enrolled in or, if employed, the post. Just send a family and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

They Said

Scorned

"Hellhath no fury than a powerful man scorned. It is not worth that is motivating [Joe Teixeira] but most probably resignation."

—Senator Liet Kap Manny Pacquiao

Shoot-to-kill

"I think there should be a shoot-to-kill order against those people already. That's my own personal view."

—Manila Secretary Raul Gonzalez, on the performance of his men

Class, pay attention!

(first of two parts)

Commentary

Eugenio Baron Apostol

I JOINED A PRESS FORUM ON EDUCATION tolerate a few days ago with Mr. Ramon del Rosario Jr. of the Philippine Business for Education (PBEd) and Dr. Chito Salazar of the PEARLS for Purpose. Both are co-chairmen of the Education Effect for "Go" do Arroz, a co-founder of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP) and an adviser to PBEd, was with us. So were former Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz, Ed dela Torre of ellen, John Forbes of the American Chamber of Commerce and Ms Ching Jorge of Ruiz Rafael Foundation.

We were concerned that the growing disappointment with those chosen to govern in our impeding serious multisectoral efforts to forge a consensus on educational reforms. Our optimism, premised on quality, Without a doubt, "better education is our light through crisis."

Here's what we—as a group—have to say:

What have education stakeholders been doing right?

We have received public attention to education at an urgent national priority. We have raised justified alarms about the deterioration of education quality. Many young Filipinos remain unable to respond to opportunities due to poor educational outcomes.

We have given our right to raise collective voice as an effort demanding redress of circumstances by entire communities at local and national levels. Today, many concerned groups and individuals are making education reform the focus of their civic action, public discourse, cause-oriented activities and educational campaigns.

In 2002, the FWWPP launched the Education Revolution as an urgent call to action to help public education. We were just a small organization with but our voice. Today, many voices have joined us. PBEd has been dedicated working for more participation of citizens in education policies. The PEARLS Education Network has been leading Education Revolution to revise—most recently in Nueva Ecija—with high-ranking officials of the Department of Education (DepEd).

Our League of Corporate Foundations—whose members belong to the top 1,000 corporations—has spearheaded in 1995, Movement to "reverse the education crisis" through a three-tiered approach that calls for focused resource mobilization to spur academic performance, sustained with a system of accountability and partnership at the grassroots level.

The DepEd now has a basic Education Sector Reform Agenda (Besra), which provides sound reform directions. Right now, the National Achievement Test Scores (NAT) of our Grade 6 students have increased from a low of 40-50 percent in school-year 2002-2003 to 59-64 percent in 2006-2007. NAT scores of our high school students have likewise climbed from 35-13 percent to 46-64 percent. These are modest gains to be sure, but they do show that a consistent upward trend, and they also do show that we are still not go.

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) has correctly focused on tertiary level quality assurance systems that provide the right signals for institutional improvements.

Above all, we are beginning to think right about education reforms. We are just about good programs and activities, and not just about how good programs and activities should be implemented well. It is about consistently and continued, by improving how Filipinos learn and how well our country's learning systems operate in historyby Filipino skills.

What have we been doing wrong?

Too many good people who care about education remain disconnected from the emerging action effort to improve our country's learning systems. There are still too many short-term, reactive, well-meaning and charitable initiatives in education that ignore and even tolerate systemic failures to connect actions with results. Many of these well-intentioned efforts waste valuable resources, for while they may make their proponents feel better, they do not actually change, and at times even worsen, the situation.

There is still too much wrong, bad and harmful education content being propagated in our country's learning system. Some are formally and are officially approved, while others are informal, unofficial views; other teachings tend to exacerbate helplessness and confusion, rather than intensify empowerment and purpose.

Too much of the education enterprise, particularly in basic education, is still not learner-centered and the professional education bureaucracy are governed by politics of the worst kind—self-serving, corrupt, short-sighted, expedient, and driven by patronage. Too many decisions in appointments, funding and policies are still made on the basis of who they do for politicians rather than what they do for education outcomes.

What must we do?

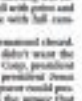
1. We should build a permanent national alliance based on enduring values and principles of educational reform, and commitment to the continuous improvement of Philippine learning systems at national and local levels, in public and private sectors, in basic and higher education. We should broaden the public discourse on education goals and content. We must emphasize basic learning skills, particularly reading proficiency. We must strive to continuously raise the quality of teaching practices at all levels and spheres.

(Conclusion next week)

Eugenio Baron Apostol is the founding chair of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power and the proponent of the Education Revolution...a call for People Power to help bring to our youth the quality education that they deserve.

Meralco chocolate

Between Deadlines



HERSEY BAR. THE DAY STARTED EARLY enough—employees and ordinary stockholders were lined up outside—as early as 6:30 a.m.—at Tektite Towers opposite the Philippine Stock Exchange, compared to Ortigas Center by 7 a.m., and reporters were on the scene by 8 a.m. By the time the Meralco stockholders' meeting was called to order at 9 a.m., the Meralco Theater was filled almost to the rafters.

In past years, Meralco stockholders' meetings ended by 11 or 11:30 a.m. from 12:30 p.m. was already a stretch, made possible only with discreet questions from "senior stockholders" who attend the meeting every year to ask how much the company is saving per returned scuttler (CB) and urging Meralco CEO Manuel Lopez to run for president of the Philippines.

But last Tuesday's meeting, because of the management challenges thrown by Government Service Insurance System chief and Meralco director Winston Garcia, lasted almost 11 hours, leaving many a stockholder hungry, exhausted and envelope. Lopez family patriarch Oscar was no exception. Way past noon, he was spotted munching on a piece of chocolate; one of the reporters was passing around energy bars to the hungry stockholders during the event. Many stockholders had to content themselves with dreams of lunch.

A. Ho

* * *

POWER CONFIDENTIAL. A day after the 114-year-long Manila Electric Co. stockholders' meeting, the Department of Energy called a meeting of power industry stakeholders, with an invitation for the media to cover the event.

At shortly before 7 a.m. on Wednesday, a text message from the DOE advised reporters that the meeting had been moved to cover the 8 a.m. meeting after all and that the session wouldn't be open to media until 11 a.m. Okay, late notice, but at least reporters were still invited.

Play before 11 a.m., the small area right outside the boardroom where the meeting was being held was already almost full with print and broadcast reporters, complete with full cameras set-ups and crews.

But at 11 a.m., the doors remained closed. Why? Probably because there didn't want the media to hear National Power Corp. president Cyril del Callar and Meralco president Jesus Francisco arguing. Or that Napocor could possibly leave Meralco if it pegged the power that they would sell to Meralco at a flat rate of P4.13 per kilowatt-hour.

It wasn't until almost noon, when Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes noticed most of the reporters getting restless right outside the boardroom's glass doors, that he allowed the media entry. Before leaving us, he addressed the meeting as follows: "Do you still have anything confidential to discuss? Better do it now because the reporters already want to barge in."

A. Ho

* * *

GOOD'S LAMENT. The wave of the AFP Museum located at military headquarters in Camp Aguinaldo are not limited to the lack of power supply. Indeed, if a new transformer was installed yesterday, as the AFP told museum staff, electricity could have already been restored by the time power went out.

The flashlight theft is a garden outside the museum where military curated like a 155 El Shaw, a Saber Jet, a two-man Submarine, a Scout Jeep Tank and a howitzer are big hits among schoolchildren and their fathers.

Unfortunately museum administrator Elizabeth Dapitan said, thieves had stolen the metal plate describing the Scorpion tank. A golf ball marker and a flashlight are likewise missing. Here (A golf course approach across the museum.) And some enterprising individuals had taken off the navigational aids of the Huey called the "cyclic" (leaving the museum staff to lock the chopper's doors to prevent the thieves from removing the Huey's cyclic).

Dapitan said she had been told that heavy rain at nearby Sta. Mesa Pier 18 had caused some of the museum's exhibits to get damaged. Here's hoping that kind of attitude doesn't become so rain it would end up in a museum!

N. Dhem

* * *

GAB FAIR. The Chinese government has been hosting delegations of Filipino journalists in the last several months, in the run-up to the Olympics. One such delegation this September included Ms. Bonnie Evardo reporting a metaphor-laden-sounding dispatch on the Olympic torch relay, just to the north of the famous Forbidden City in Beijing, as guests of a ranking government official. Dinner conversation was lively, the Hale General Information Office interpreters were very helpful in English and Filipino pronunciation. Official translator spoke excellent English.

But the conversation momentarily ground to a halt when, out of the blue, a try familiar from countless Hollywood movies was heard. "Taxi!"

The Filipinos looked around, but it was only the sound of honking taxi horns and official's cellphone to the chorus of compliments that followed, the host admitted a Philippine government official had found the ringtone—and asked to copy it. Call it cellphone diplomacy.

J. Nery

The INQUIRER is a member of the PHILIPPINE PRESS INSTITUTE

Ecclesiastical paradox

LETTERS

I FULLY AGREE WITH THE OBSERVATION of Archbishop Ramon Arguelles that "Hospitals run in quagmire of corruption." (Inquirer, 4/12/08)

As a devout Catholic, I have had close encounters (experiences) with the clergy. But recent events, which clearly showed their glaring bias for a corrupt administration, had me wondering what is happening to our country.

Shining congressmen, military and police generals and officers, government executives, prelates and priests, and even bishops to top their support and loyalty in a tragic bow for all Filipinos now reeling from high prices and rice shortages.

The bishops are exhorting the people to pray and pray to eradicate corruption. And when in the name of corruption are we to heed the prayers to combat corruption. Who is true?

Archbishop Oscar Cruz and Bro. Ed Pacalbo have recently restored and exposed the unbridled corruption in government. What do they get? Archbishop Cruz is being besmirched and charged by the Department of Justice and Governor Datilio is being harassed and threatened with recall by his own team of local officials.

How long can our people endure all these? Scam after scam, hardship after hardship, and poverty, like a pestilence, creeping all over?

—RICARDO D. SIGON,
33 Mahaw St.,
Barrio Kalaya,
Marikina City

Zubiri always for death penalty

I WRITE TO CLARIFY SEVERAL items in the editorial titled "Swords and deadly" (Inquirer, 5/24/08) as attributed to me especially with respect to what I have always said.

The second paragraph reads: "The legislators calling for restoration say they have been inundated by signals—deafening, they say—from Malacañang." Others who said remains a member of the administration coalition also declared the universal votes that enabled the death penalty law's passage in 1993.

Nothing is further from the truth. I saw a negative vote on House Bill 4825 (HB An Prohibiting the Imposition of Death Penalty in the Philippines) which sought to abolish the death law. My vote clearly showed the imposition of death as a penalty, because I believed that taking the death penalty could be the start of the broadened of lawful orders. Also, I refused to be swayed by people's observation that the bad already existed. Open the newspapers today and you will see a number of murderers and multiple murders committed by psychopathic criminals.

In that time, the deterrence power of the death penalty had not been tested enough in the years preceding its prohibition in 2006. Now, I am glad that death penalty is back. Only eight persons were punished with it.

As I had said in 2006, many foreign workers in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Singapore await execution for drug trafficking. Despite the fear of being severely punished, in France, the abolition of the death penalty was naturally followed by the massacre of 180 children. The law must serve as a deterrent.

Death is further from the truth. I saw a negative vote on House Bill 4825 (HB An Prohibiting the Imposition of Death Penalty in the Philippines) which sought to abolish the death law. My vote clearly showed the imposition of death as a penalty, because I believed that taking the death penalty could be the start of the broadened of lawful orders. Also, I refused to be swayed by people's observation that the bad already existed. Open the newspapers today and you will see a number of murderers and multiple murders committed by psychopathic criminals.

In that time, the deterrence power of the death penalty had not been tested enough in the years preceding its prohibition in 2006. Now, I am glad that death penalty is back. Only eight persons were punished with it.

As I had said in 2006, many foreign workers in Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and Singapore await execution for drug trafficking. Despite the fear of being severely punished, in France, the abolition of the death penalty was naturally followed by the massacre of 180 children. The law must serve as a deterrent.

—SEN. JUAN MIGUEL ZUBIRI

Request in GSIS pensions sought

FOR THE LAST FOUR YEARS alone has been no increase in the pensions of government retirees. The increase can help them cope with the rising cost of living currently inflicted.

However, GSIS president Winston Garcia rejects this inflation as shown by the GSIS' The economy is good and the price is strong. But this is not felt by the marginalized people, among them GSIS pensioners. Only the rich of Wack-Wack, Ayala-Land Areyes and those close to her feel the economic growth. Which is not surprising, considering the questionable projects that reportedly favor the rich and powerful at the Cabinet and friends.

The Government Service Insurance System was created to help members retire from gainful employment or due to public service. Garcia has been bragging that the GSIS has substantial funds out of the yearly surplus earnings. It is, therefore, easy to see that the GSIS can afford to grant a yearly increase in GSIS pensioners. He, is it only in fairness and under the Aenejo admin- tration that increase in GSIS pensions have not been granted.

Garcia's predecessors were conservative and responsive to the needs of pensioners. When inflation struck, they immediately raised the pensions. President Arroyo has raised the salaries of government employees to help them cope with the present economic crisis. It is high time that she did the same with the GSIS pensioners, 93 percent of whom are senior citizens. Their pensions are truly below the poverty line. They need the help of the GSIS to live decently.

We, pensioners, hope and pray that immediate action would be taken regarding this request.

—GUILLERMO L. QUIETO,
LTC (ret.), Phase 4,
House 99, Block 2,
Bulacan, Tambobong City 7980

Ban on land conversion should stay

A NEWS ITEM IN THE INQUIRER disclosed that the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Associations Inc. (Cerbai) might be forced to ask the Supreme Court to lift the moratorium on land conversion because of the Department of Agrarian Reform's refusal to lift it. The news item stated "the progress of the whole country is being held hostage by the CARP because of the ban on conversion." (Inquirer, 5/4/08)

The Philippines is an agricultural and archipelagic country. It is therefore logical to assume that it is abundant in food and water. But not so, as Filipinos are now having a hard time, and it's getting harder by the day, to get a reliable supply of drinking water.

As everybody knows and has seen, food-producing lands in the country, particularly the fertile, have been converted into farming and industrial sites, and even golf courses. But many of these lands, because their developers were able to get conversion permits and lease on them, are now abandoned. Except that now they don't produce food as they used to. The lands were "used" as open golf courses and parks.

The government must stand firm on its ban on the conversion of arable and food-producing lands. Let us use idle lands, not food-producing lands, for housing and industrial projects.

—LEONARD Del SOLAR,
114-B Alma, Bacoor, Cavite

A reader's wish upon a wish

READ TO THE INQUIRER FOR its project of making the wishes of some readers come true. I always look forward to reading stories of those people whose wishes have been granted. The kindness and goodwill the readers upgrade by helping these senseless their dreams cannot be measured in monetary terms.

I have my own wish—that the Inquirer will maintain this worthwhile project. It is also my wish that other publications will believe the Inquirer's example and venture on such similar projects. More power to the Inquirer.

—JESUS ARNOLD REYES,
Purok Rose Heights 3,
Las Piñas City 1740

What ails press club

IT IS SAD THAT NINE CHIZ centra to be adverse to calling attention to the plight of the most prestigious National Press Club (NPC). Perhaps, the NPC, like many key institutions in the Philippines, has succumbed to the lure of power and greed that now dominate the land, thanks to Pet dinand Marcos and the presidents that succeeded him. The demagogues that they were, they vowed to champion the poor only to mobilize oligarchic regimes. There is no irony here for that was their plan. Hence, it is these regimes that paved the way for the emergence of the NPC.

I hope Chiz is, and was not, party to the clarificational journalism of the NPC's Board of Governors last year. Or a presentation of the call president AGDC stays of many a journalist.

I think one reason for the lack of courage [Colorado de Quiroz] regular [unreal] over the decades of repression is precisely the fear and perception that the regime have been into "compromises" with oligarchs. Another reason could be the repeated abuse of the power of the press by the journalists-allies of the regime.

We could not go far, how many pages or sections of newspapers are devoted to "high society"? How many columnists are there who only talk of what they eat and where they have?

I wrote this to old-fashioned souls that I still wonder why some of my contemporaries still had the temerity as an opponent of an autocratic press. Though there is an more puzzlement over Cruz's celebrity campaign to bring the NPC back to its place of pride. But I am saddened and angered that Edna Burgos gets little help from my friends.

—LET'S ACTION,
edsaon07@yahoo.com

LADY veterans at an Araw ng Kagitingan (Bataan Day) reunion for the last April 9

Republicans opposed law for Filipino veterans

THE FILAM GROUPS LAUDED the US Senate's approval of a negotiation giving pension benefits to about 18,000 Filipino veterans who fought alongside American soldiers during World War II.

Senate Democrats Sen. Daniel Akaka sponsored the bill. However, Republicans opposed the measure. President George W. Bush, wanted the money to be spent instead for soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Inquirer, 4/26/08)

Bush and other Republicans seem must not forget that the Philippines and (Santa) were so, unthinkingly and treacherously bombed by the Japanese in 1941—the Philippines because it was a US colony then. There were not US soldiers; and some 10 US soldiers did not die in the Philippines at that time, and many Filipinos died fighting with US soldiers.

Bush and company must bear in mind that what is happening in Iraq and Afghanistan is their own undoing. Mother of those countries, that is a colony of the United States.

PS Am (name) must drink coffee when they vote (mis) US presidential elections. Or is this (Starbucks)?

—EUGENE M. DUFFAUT,
Kaniwalis Subd.,
Concepcion I, Marikina City

Jelac: 'out of the box' solution to judiciary's problems

I READ WITH MUCH INTEREST the President's May 21 editorial titled "Settle the budget." When we proposed the Joint Judicial, Executive and Legislative Advisory and Coordinative Council (Jelac) in an early as July of 2007, during the Lacson-Sotto filibustering, we envisioned all three branches of government working together to address the conditions of our judiciary. We are the proponents of Jelac through the ongoing and we are happy to see the realization of this proposal.

Allow me to clarify certain statements in order to allay the fears expressed by some that this new body might undermine the independence of the Supreme Court. I believe that here are enough safeguards in place to ensure that this is avoided.

Firstly, the creation of the Jelac is not by law but by a unanimous vote of agreement (MOA) items, as any given state, any party to the agreement may send notice to other parties if it desires to withdraw from participating in the council. The heads of the Supreme Court, therefore, are not bound by the Jelac. Should the Judiciary deem it necessary to disengage from the Jelac because of legal or policy differences, it can do so.

Secondly, the creation of the Jelac was executed by an MOA and law by law precisely because the Supreme Court is not involved in its nature. In a manner to the exact the most needed reforms in the administration of justice by way of budgetary and other forms of support. In the event that significant reforms have been put in place, then the council can be dissolved. The sooner it is dissolved, the better, because this would mean that reforms have been executed and the council's existence has become unnecessary.

Bush and company must bear in mind that what is happening in Iraq and Afghanistan is their own undoing. Mother of those countries, that is a colony of the United States.

PS Am (name) must drink coffee when they vote (mis) US presidential elections. Or is this (Starbucks)?

—EUGENE M. DUFFAUT,
Kaniwalis Subd.,
Concepcion I, Marikina City

The Jelac is meant to address serious problems that have plagued the judiciary and the administration of justice for decades. This requires new approaches, new methods and new strategies. The Jelac is an 'out of the box' solution to these problems. It is a body that can address problems of problems that refuse to go away.

We cannot expect the recurring problems to be solved if we apply the same old, tried-and-ineffective methods. Even more than ever, we need to be bold. Bold, creative and innovative approaches to solve the nation's ills, and the Jelac is one such approach. By providing the much-needed budgetary support for judicial reforms, the Jelac will in fact strengthen the independence of the judiciary rather than undermine it.

—SEN. FRANCIS "KIKO" PANGILINAN,
majority leader,
Senate of the Philippines

Urban poor and Bicol farmers

COMMENTARY

Dennis Murphy

I HAVE OFTEN WONDERED TO MYSELF how can compare my urban poor families who are ordered and left in the streets to survive as best as they can without light, food, water, heaters, or any idea of where they will move when the time comes. Many of these urban poor children I see everyday are compared to Bicol, in the small barrios who have lost crops the last two years and now watch the rain fall on their now tree and vegetable shoots to rejoice the entire week we were there. We saw farmers huddled in their huts with their families forlornly watching the rain fall. There was already too much water in the fields.

Stella Sarza, 33, a single mother living in Iriga, Camarines Sur with her three children, told us she lost her crops last year, her house—the family now lives in the one small room with mudding— her only land is the same land she tilled, and now she has to work to get out of debt," she said. Even if everything goes all right this year, she will not break even. If there are months, the poor deeper in debt. "How will we improve?" she asks. The admits she has no realistic hope, but she says her prayers. She has what Fr. Charlie Avila, SJ, calls "Christian hope"—that is, hope that in her misery there is no hope.

We traveled through three Bicol provinces, Camarines Sur, Albay and Sorsogon, and found it a beautiful, but tragic region. The tallest pine hill in the entire island in Manila are also tragic, as are the thousands of families who will be evicted but without the relocation promised by the Commission, the courts have and the International covenants the Philippines has signed. The three Manila Development Authority and, increasingly urban agencies, simply ignore the law in addition to application, forcefully illegal. Demolition has started is, often cash—P2,000, 30,000, P10,000—of families destroy their own homes. This practice, too, is illegal. A poor woman, a member of the Zone One Tondo Organization, once told me what she thought as she looked at the ruins of her home destroyed by Mayor Lim: "I fled to raid I can cry. I was instructions. I had my children here. We had so many happy times together. We were poor, but we helped each other. We were a community. Now we are nothing. We have no home, no work, no money, no food. We are hungry. We are sick. We are desperate. We are afraid. We are ashamed. We are humiliated. We are broken. We are lost. We are alone. We are forgotten. We are invisible. We are dead."

The most incisive analysis comes from the Pope's Justice and Peace Commission: "Any person or family that, without any direct fault on his or her own, does not have sufficient housing is the victim of an injustice." (Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, FAO, quoted by the Philippine Bishops in their "Message on Homelessness," January 2007). While dealing with urban poor problems, we are wearing a problem both in relative injustice.

The bishops discuss the rights of the poor that are especially violated: "The poor people, as human beings and children of God, have basic human rights as those and irresponsible must, decent homes, uninterrupted free of exposure disease-ridden water, and uncontrolled garbage. They have a right to ownership of assets, to be free of a constant threat of eviction and fire, and very importantly, they have the right to organize themselves in work solidarity to their problems in a democratic and a non-violent manner. We are all compelled to do everything possible to remedy this situation."

Injustice and human rights are a good framework point for approaching urban poor problems. First, it will help put some of the more immediate goals in mind—light, water, jobs, and security. It will also force officials who wish to remove people to justify their actions to the people's case, based on human rights, it already clear that a resettlement will help people see their way to understanding why they are being asked to move. Finally, and most importantly, it will appeal to the basic of the poor, the softness of the chest, for example. "Why should we invest in our homes and communities if we may be evicted tomorrow soon?" the poor reasonably ask.

The country, however, doesn't have to forego infrastructure and other economic growth and honor the human rights of the poor. Investments can push for improvement in the cities and towns, and also make good use of the people who suffer as a result of the improvements. We have demonstrate, have numerous organizations that the residents of urban poor communities can move the city just, all that would be needed is a decision and a strong police force.

There are reasons for removing people from their homes, but "Move Garage" is not one. The program seeks to make Manila look attractive to investors and, in pursuit of this goal, it demolishes the homes of poor people, even those living in the dark under our bridges. Attractiveness of the city has never appeared high up on investors' list of why they fail to invest here. The reasons in cricket with the government. Topping the list are penalty—corruption, excessive red tape, inflexibility, and investment laws.

Denis Murphy works with the Urban Poor Associates. His email address is upa@pldtdsl.net.

SO THAT THE PUBLIC MAY KNOW

In order to clarify numerous inaccurate facts being hurled against our products Lucida-DS and Vaniderm, We would like to inform the public that before our company started importing Lucida-DS and Vaniderm from our United States Manufacturer / Supplier, the BFAD has issued a Certificate of Product Registration (CPR) confirming that Lucida-DS and Vaniderm "have been found to conform with the requirements and standards for registration of food supplement products per existing regulations of the BFAD".

Aside from the Certificate of Product Registration issued by the BFAD, We, as importers of Lucida-DS and Vaniderm always make sure, for our benefit and more importantly for the benefit of our consumers, that each batch of importation has the adequate components as indicated in the medical literature by submitting them for Assay / Testing. All the batches of importation of Lucida-DS and Vaniderm have passed all the Assays / Testings conducted since our company started importing them from the United States.

Thank you for your continued patronage of Lucida-DS and Vaniderm

BFAD CPR - Lucida-DS

BFAD CPR - Vaniderm

Philippine Institute of Pure and Applied Chemistry (PIPAC) July 17, 2008

USFDA - Export Certificate

USFDA - Free Sale Certificate

Adamson University Technology Research and Development Center (AUTRDC) Jan. 15, 2008

Across the NATION

Subic a 'consolidation point for drugs'

By Robert Gonzaga
Inquirer Central Luzon

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN Authority Administrator Armand Arreza has expressed concern that this freeport has become a "consolidation point" for international drug syndicates operating in Asia, following the seizure of 770 kilograms of shabu here this week.

Arreza said the drug haul, worth P4.6 billion, was "the largest [discovery] in the freeport's zone."

"I was very surprised. This is shocking ... Before, we would only find packs of shabu [methamphetamine hydrochloride] hidden in container vans ... With this much shabu, whoever is responsible can supply the whole country," said Arreza.

He, however, said he did not believe the entire shipment was meant for the Philippine underground market alone.

"Some, if not most of this shipment, we suspect, will be taken out of the country. It [was] containing shabu found in the Hua Lung International warehouse here] would have been immediately taken out of the freeport entirely if the smuggler did not intend to bring it somewhere else," Arreza said.

"The freeport is just being used by those involved as a consolidation point," he added.

The taipan, Anthony "Jaime" Ang, general manager of Hua Lung International, a cigarette importer doing business in the freeport since 2004, had tried to bring out boxes auctioned by a Toronto-registered vessel that came from Yantai in the Shenzhen port here on Sunday.

Ang was held by operatives of the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Group and Task Force Subic briefly to inspect the contents of the boxes loaded in 600 cubicle containers. Ang, however, refused saying he would produce documents showing that the cargo was legal.

He returned the following day but again failed to show these records. He fled after trying to bribe operatives with P50 million in exchange for releasing the cargo that he said contained "sensitive computer parts."

On Tuesday, when PNP and TPS agents opened the boxes, they found packs of shabu inside. In follow-up operations on Wednesday, the agents found the bulk of the illegal drugs in Hua Lung's warehouse here.

PNP agents and police said Ang and his family had left their house in Barangay West Bajac-Bajac in Olongapo City.

Though the agents and crew members of the vessel FS Shun Fa Xing escaped, Arreza said the SBMA was monitoring other vessels associated with Hua Lung.

"We are also looking into the list of vessels that Hua Lung had used in the past. If any of those vessels return, then we will investigate them," he said.

PNP chief Antonio Villar Jr. said the PNP, and the police have started a manhunt against Ang.

"Police is coordinating with the Philippine National Police and Interpol. We've asked the Bureau of Immigration [to issue] hold departure orders," Villar told the Inquirer.

Villar said the PNP's initial investigation showed that a Taiwanese "financier" personnel in Subic, Ronalie Labrusca, signed the ship's documents and declared it "TELCARGO."

"This means that there was no cargo on board. Laborsa et al. so wrote in his remarks that the ship had no dangerous cargo on board," Villar said.

"We are assuming that Laborsa signed the ship's documents after inspecting it. We suppose that there are people in high places behind this," said Villar.

He said PNSC also investigated Hua Lung's operations manager, Enrique Ong, and Rolando Lubandres, the driver of the second van where the 600 kg of shabu was found. The van was parked in the firm's warehouse.

Villar said both denied involvement in Ang's activities.

"[Ong] didn't know the shabu was hidden in the warehouse. He didn't know what Ang, his boss, was up to," said Villar.

But Villar said the call logs in the mobile phones of Ong and Lubandres showed that they were placing calls to and receiving calls from Ang.

Lubandres said Ang had called him to monitor the cargo, which he said he did not know to contain shabu.

Villar said PNP would file charges against both men once its legal team has established their responsibility.

500 displaced families run out of food, says mayor

GAMBOANGA CITY—ABOUT 500 families displaced by the latest clash between soldiers and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) rebels in Baghaya Palacao in Basilan have run out of provisions and were forced to forage for food, Mayor Joel Maruyan said.

"Not a single social welfare personnel went up here to deliver food assistance or relief," Maruyan said.

Because of lack of food, the displaced residents have to consume themselves such resources and bananas for dear enough days now, he added.

"My people are suffering. Although there are cassava and bananas, these are not enough," he said.

Maruyan said what compounded the problem was the scarcity of funds.

"Much as I want to help, I don't have funds for emergency. I don't even have money to buy medicines or sand clothing," he said by phone.

A television report quoted some villagers as saying they were starving for the military's go-signal so they could go back to their homes.

But Maruyan said the military might not allow civilians back in their villages yet because of reports MILF rebels were regrouping in Maligcong village.

Aside from the lack of food, Maruyan said he was also worried that clashes would not be held to the allowed villages.

Major Commandante Hoj, Gen. Ben Dolorfino said they were trying to avoid a direct confrontation with the MILF which is supposed to ignore talks with the government.

"The troops were cleared to only away from schools and populated areas," he said. Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

SEAWEED PRODUCER
A man shows his seaweed farm located in Balo Sea, in Sibuco town, Zamboanga del Norte. Tawi-Tawi is the major producer of seaweeds in the country.

Vizcaya village chief in mining row shot dead

CAMP SAMUEL DUMLAO, Nueva Vizcaya—The chief of a remote upland village in Kasibu town was gunned down Thursday night, police officials said Friday.

Supt. Domingo Lucas, acting provincial police director, said Ducilino Bagnilan, 52, village chief of Dalipis, was shot and killed by still unidentified suspects while on his way home to the village center at around 7 p.m.

Bagnilan suffered three bullet wounds in his chest and one in his head, Lucas said.

"We cannot yet determine what type of firearm was used because we have not found empty shells at the crime scene," said Lucas, who led the investigation to Dalipis on Friday.

Neighbors heard Bagnilan sprawled on the grassy part of a downhill trail, about 50 meters from his house, he said.

"It is clear that the suspects really wanted him dead. From our initial findings, it seemed that the assassins waited for him," he added.

Lucas said they were still conducting witnesses, including family members, to shed light on the killing, amid fear and shock among villagers.

Since 1999, Dalipis, a village of about 2,000 residents, has been deeply divided due to the large-scale mining project being proposed in the area by OceanaGold Philippines Inc., an Australian firm.

Dalipis officials, however, declined to link Bagnilan's killing to the ongoing mining controversy in Dalipis.

After failing in his reelection bid in 2002, Bagnilan headed as a community relations officer of the mining firm. He was again elected village chief in October 2007.

Bagnilan was popular among pro-mining residents in Dalipis for openly supporting the mining project, but also faced strong criticism from many of his constituents, including members of the Dalipis village council.

A number of residents were disgruntled over Bagnilan's supposed inaction on the alleged violations committed by the mining firm, including their election from their lands, according to Peter Dayupan, a former village councilor.

Since December last year, residents have continued to fight the demolition by the company of houses within the 425-hectare area in Dalipis, site of the project's proposed production area.

According to an investigation conducted by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples last month, at least 23 people complained that their homes were demolished without receiving compensation from OceanaGold.

Dayupan said the company has torn down the hanging bridge in the sub-village of Barlocan and village roads have been bulldozed, but Dalipis leaders seem helpless.

"Some thought [Bagnilan] was more sympathetic to the company than to his constituents. But I still don't believe such statements would lead anyone to threaten to do such a horrible crime," said Dayupan, president of the Dalipis Barlocan Multi-Purpose Association Inc. (Dameo), a people's organization opposed to mining activities in the village. Melvin Gascon, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Radioman's lawyers file writ of habeas corpus

DAVAO CITY—THE LAWYERS of Alexander "Lex" Adonis yesterday filed a petition for writ of habeas corpus before the Supreme Court after officials of the Davao Prisons and Penal Farm (DPPF) in Davao del Norte refused to release the broadcaster, who was jailed for libel, despite a court order allowing him to post bail.

Adonis has become the icon for the fight against libel.

Lawyer Harry Roque, one of the lawyers handling Adonis' case, said there were no more reasons to hold Adonis inside the DPPF after the Regional Trial Court approved the bail bond posted for his temporary release on Wednesday.

DPPF is the former Davao Penal Colony (Dapecol).

"Dapecol's holding of Adonis is not justified," Roque said after Quezon City Rep. Lorenzo Tañada III, chairman of the Bureau of Corrections, refused to release Adonis.

Reyes said he could only let go of the broadcaster if there was already an approved from Manila.

"He has no business arrogating unto himself judicial powers," Roque said.

He said a writ of habeas corpus is a judicial mandate ordering a person officials to bring an inmate in court to determine whether or not he has been imprisoned lawfully and whether or not he will be released from custody.

Expecting the broadcaster's release, Tañada and his staff escaped to DPPF on Monday but they were home disappointed after Reyes turned down the court order.

"We thought we could already bring him home," said Dodong Solis, the station manager of radio station dxDC, who was among the journalists working for the jailed broadcaster's release. "We were so disappointed." Lucrecia Bacalso, Inquirer Mindanao

IT TOOK four men to lift the 81-kilogram green sea turtle caught by residents of Barangay Talisay in Virac, Catanduanes, as local officials and residents led by Gov. Joseph Cua and DENR Regional Executive Director Jacinto Marcos Fragata look on.

NEWSBRIEFS

■ TACLOBAN CITY

NPA intelligence officer surrenders

AN ALLEGED leader of the communist rebel movement in Leyte surrendered to military authorities on Saturday.

Lt. Col. Harvey Bendijo, commanding officer of the 19th Infantry Battalion in Kananga town, Leyte, said Jumpmel de los Reyes, 27, was the team leader of the intelligence unit of the New People's Army's (NPA) Northern Leyte Front Command.

He said the rebel, who reportedly joined the NPA in 1998, decided to leave the organization due to the failure of its leaders to "provide them financial security as promised to them."

Joey A. Gallardo, Inquirer Visayas

■ DIGOS CITY

Gunmen on motorbike kill jeepney conductor

MOTORCYCLE-RIDING men shot and killed a jeepney conductor while he was walking home from a village dance in Kiblawan in Hagonoy, Davao del Sur, on May 26, police said.

Town police chief Insp. Jaime Ismael Ibo said the motive for the killing of Ronel Inguna, 31, and the identities of the attackers have yet to be determined. Inguna died from bullet wounds in the head, neck and chest.

Elda E. Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao

■ PAGADIAN CITY

No fare increase for tricycle drivers

AFTER having been tipped off that the city council was not poised to grant the fare increase they were asking, tricycle drivers and operators in Pagadian City have withdrawn their petition.

In a letter dated May 28, Jerusalem Duterte, president of the Pagadian Independent Tricycle Drivers and Operators Cooperative, told the council that his group would wait until it granted them at least a P2 increase in minimum fare. Passengers are currently paying a minimum of P7.

Julius Rivas, Inquirer Mindanao

■ COTABATO CITY

DAR cashier, husband shot dead

UNIDENTIFIED gunmen on Wednesday shot dead a cashier of the Department of Agrarian Reform in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao and her husband.

City police chief Senior Supt. Wilfredo Cayapan said that Rizalina Mendoza and her husband, Agapito Mendoza, were heading home aboard the family-owned SUV car when the suspects, riding in tandem on a motorbike, shot them along the busy corner of Sinsuat Avenue and Pelaez de Street around 5:20 p.m. They were declared dead at a hospital here.

Cayapan said the victims, who were newly wed, had been receiving death threats from still unidentified persons prior to the incident.

Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

■ VIRAC, Catanduanes

Green sea turtle released to sea

OFFICIALS of the provincial government and the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources joined residents of Barangay Talisay Friday morning in releasing an 81-kilogram green sea turtle back to the sea.

The mature-long turtle was caught at around 6:30 a.m. on a beach nearby Thursday morning as it was about to lay eggs, said Gov. Joseph C. Cua.

Edith Milan of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office said the placard tag number on the turtle's flipper and shell will help them track it down if it comes back to lay eggs.

Ferdie Diaman, Inquirer Southern Luzon

MDPPA

MOTORCYCLE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS ASSOCIATION, INC.

DOTC

HSDC

ARRIVE ALIVE-SAFE DRIVE FOR LONGER LIFE

MAY 31, 2008
QUIRINO GRANDSTAND

Ride Safely. ENJOY LIFE

HON. RAMON "BONG" REVILLA, JR.
Author
Mandatory Standard Helmet Bill 1663

Greetings to the Motorcycle Development Program Participants Association, Inc.!

I join you in your "**Arrive Alive Safe Drive For Longer Life!**" program that aims to promote road safety and discipline for motorcycle enthusiasts.

As we see the rapid increase of motorcycle units in our streets, especially now when we recognize the practicality of motorcycles, the invaluable role of ensuring that only responsible drivers are put behind the handle bars squarely rests upon all our shoulders.

This is why I am elated to see the various sectors involved in motorcycle transport, especially you the manufacturers and producers, coming together to formulate and implement measures that would make our roads and streets safer not only for motorists but also for pedestrians.

I am also very thankful for your support to Senate Bill 1663, or the Mandatory Standard Helmet Bill, and Senate Bill 2149, or the Kids-off Motorcycles Bill, which I both authored. Once enacted into law, motorcycle-riding in the Philippines will be a safer undertaking for everyone.

Together, let us work towards motorcycle and road safety.

Congratulations and Mabuhay!

ERIC C. LEE
President
MCX Motor (Phils.), Inc.

Greetings from the family of MCX Motor (Phils.), Inc.

I would like to congratulate the MDPPA for pioneering another milestone in the Philippine motorcycle industry.

MCX believes in the necessity of educating the motorcycle riding community properly. The effectiveness and efficiency of motorcycle as a mode of transportation is beyond question. We see safe riding education as our responsibility in decreasing, if not totally eliminating road accident.

The importance of having the riding community learn about safety riding is not the end but the beginning of a safer riding atmosphere and we are dedicated in the pursuit of this goal.

On behalf of the MCX family, I would like to extend our appreciation to all the people, the government agencies and the men and women behind this affair for making this momentous event possible.

Maraming Salamat Po!

KIYOSHI KAWAHARA
President
Suzuki Motor Philippines

Greetings from SPH & Congratulations to MDPPA!

The motorcycle industry has grown exponentially over the past few years and along this growth is the alarming increase of road accidents. There are several factors that contribute to road accidents and rank major and primary factor is human error. As a manufacturer, we believe that one way of decreasing road accidents is to increase public awareness on safety riding, not only for the motorcycle users but for every motorist on the road as well. With this, we are committing to this social responsibility and partnering with other institution in the education of motorist on safety riding.

JOSEPH SISON
President
MDPPA

Road safety is the primary concern of MDPPA. But how will we be able to do this is a bigger task ahead of us.
In doing this kind of event, we believe that in some way, we are helping the motorcycle industry as a whole. Safe road lives through education about safety and responsible driving. Let us all help minimize, if not eradicate the accidents involving motorcycles.
DRIVE SAFELY!

RENE M. GENER
Vice President
MDPPA

The alarming statistics on motorcycle road accidents prompted the Motorcycle Development Program Participants Association (MDPPA) to initiate the launching of a Safety Caravan to promote road safety awareness. With the participation of its five (5) member companies, Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki, Motorstar and MCX, MDPPA converts on this activity to educate motorcycle users/riders on the importance of safety riding so they can fully utilize their bikes as essential mode of transportation and at the same time discover the fun of riding. MDPPA has already been at the forefront of road safety. In 2007, several motorcycle roadshows were held in different cities with the emphasis on safety riding. As an offshoot of the organization, it strongly support activities geared towards safety as it is our obligation as an association of motorcycle manufacturers to prioritize safety in all its activities. We should make it our advocacy to promote SAFETY RIDING at all times.

HON. DANTE LANTIN
Assistant Secretary, Road Transport
Department of Transportation and Communication

My warmest greetings to all the road users as we celebrate the Road Safety Month this May.
Road safety continues to be one of the nation's most serious public health issues. The loss of lives and property due to road accidents has significantly increased over the years.
The month of May has been designated as the Road Safety Month to instill awareness and to cultivate road safety consciousness among us Filipinos.

This year's theme: "Arrive Alive!—Safe Drive for Longer Life!", shows the urgency of addressing the issues of road safety since this affects everyone.

Understanding and practicing road safety is everyone's concern—it could save your life, or someone else's.

Hence, I encourage everyone to get actively involved in the road safety advocacy by understanding this vital issue, campaigning for it and working towards promoting safety on our roads.

You can make a difference!

Mabuhay!

KAZUHIKO IKEZOE
President and General Manager
Honda Philippines, Inc.

In behalf of Honda Philippines, I would like to congratulate the MDPPA on the occasion of this momentous event!

As an active member of the association and the leading player in the motorcycle manufacturing industry, we consider it as obligation to the society to promote the importance of road safety. With its versatility, economy and reliability, motorcycle is now an essential and effective alternative mode of transportation to many Filipinos. The need for a wider road safety awareness is necessary with increasing motorcycle population. In response to this, we have put up the Honda Safety Driving Center to cater to the needs of all two-wheel and four-wheel drivers.

Our deepest appreciation goes to all the riders, the government agencies and all the people involved in making this event a success.

Let's all work for safer roads in the future!

YOSHIHISO TANIGAWA
President
Kawasaki Motors (Phils.) Corporation

We would like to congratulate the MDPPA for spearheading this road safety campaign.

Road safety is a concern that not only touches a small portion of society here in the Philippines. It touches almost everyone who owns a car, who crosses a road to go to work, who uses a street to get somewhere.

The sad thing is that not many people are aware or are schooled about road safety. For most of them, road safety simply means sticking to the proper lane or following traffic rules. They are not aware, for instance, about the proper use of head and body gears. As a result, many motorists brave the streets without protection, which results in accidents and worse, deaths.

With the number of accidents piling up on our busy roads, road safety is not only a must. It's an imperative!

JOSEPH TE
President
Eastworld Motor Industries Corp./Motorstar

I'd like to congratulate the MDPPA for having this kind of event geared towards promoting road safety. It's a very timely endeavor due to rising accidents involving motorcycles.

TO ALL THE RIDERS: LIFE IS A PRICELESS TREASURE. LIVE YOUR LIFE. LOVE YOUR LIFE. BE A RESPONSIBLE RIDER.

ALLAN B. SANTIAGO
Chairman
Research and Planning Committee-MDPPA
MCX Motor (Phils.), Inc.

SAFETY. Our primary consideration everytime we embarked on our motor vehicle. I implore you in promoting safety not only during the celebration of road safety month.

TOGETHER LET US PROTECT OUR BELOVED MOTORCYCLE INDUSTRY BY PROMOTING SAFETY.

HONDA

Kawasaki

SUZUKI

MCX MOTORCYCLES

INQUIRER Visayas

E-mail: ivy_cebu@inquirer.com.ph
Website: www.inquirervisayas.com

Editor Jon Bandoquil
News Chief Edralyn L. Benedicto

Art and law meet in this office

By Joey A. Gabieta
Tacloban City

VISITORS WHO ENter lawyer Eric de Veyra's office in Tacloban City may think they have stepped into an art gallery. They may be partly right since the room also displays the works of his artist-friend Mario Ortiz.

It all started in 2006 when Ortiz, a classmate in college, entered de Veyra's office, bringing three works in pen and ink. "He was in financial need ... One of pity and being a friend, I bought [them]

... ," the 30-year-old lawyer said. One of the drawings he bought, Sunset and the sea in his workplace.

After a few months, Ortiz returned to Dr. Veyra, bringing more works for him to buy. Again, Dr. Veyra came to the rescue of his friend, who was then sending a daughter to elementary school.

But the lawyer said he could not have spare money all the time. "So I thought of something which will help him financially and, at the same time, allow him to practice his talent to paint," he said.

He used his office as an art gallery to help Ortiz, "which is just good since we don't have one in the city." Since then, people have come to look at the paintings and buy those they like.

PARTNERS. Lawyer Eric de Veyra (left) and his artist-friend Mario Ortiz pose with a sample of the latter's workwork. (CONTRIBUTED PHOTO)

"All of his paintings are reasonably priced ranging from P3,000 to P7,000, depending on the size and degree of difficulty of the subject being painted by Mario," Dr. Veyra said.

"Sometimes, we help our people approximate paintings done by a local talent like Mario," he said.

Although he got a commission for the paintings he sells, Dr. Veyra said the scheme was not all about money. Having the paintings on display was his contribution to promoting arts in the city.

"Somehow, we help our people appreciate paintings done by a local talent like Mario," he said.

Dr. Veyra asked Ortiz to change his medium from pen and ink to the more challenging acrylic and oil, saying such paintings were what the public wants. The artist was also persuaded to do his only abstract paintings but soften them. But prospective clients could easily appreciate and understand. "He now does portraits, figurative landscapes and canal grass," Dr. Veyra said.

Ortiz said it takes two to three days to finish a piece, depending on the size. He also said he was only commissioned once in a month, he said. "But the quality of his work is not boring unrefined based on the very encouraging words and appreciation that we receive from those who see and even buy his art works."

"I am doing all my works intentionally and with full concentration. When I am doing my work, I don't like to be disturbed. I am that focused," Ortiz said.

The artist paints at his house in Basey town in Samar, 40 kilometers from Tacloban.

Some of his works are displayed in public offices, like the SOS Children's Village, St. Paul's Montessori School in Palo town, and at the municipal hall of Basey.

"Foreigners who drop by at my office to look around some of the paintings end up buying some," Dr. Veyra said.

Ortiz admitted that he had no formal painting lessons or attended any art workshop. "I guess, I really have the talent to draw, to sketch," he said.

Ortiz said he had been painting since he was in college but was not able to pursue fully his passion because he was preoccupied with other things. "I also ended up working, which did not require me to paint or sketch," he said.

When his married life turned sour, Ortiz went back to his first love — painting.

"My wife and I separated for some reasons. Expectedly, I went on my lowest level emotionally. And, as a sort of relief, I engaged myself with painting, which I really love doing," Ortiz said.

He realized that his works did not bring in money as he had expected, so he sought out and found a partner in Dr. Veyra, enabling him to indulge in his talent and earn a decent income.

Loboc River is 'nature by day, boulevard by night'

By Kit Bagaipo
Loboc, Bohol

SCENIC LOBOC RIVER in Bohol has something new to offer to guests who want to experience the rustic environment that has popularized river cruising in Loboc town, which is fast becoming a tourist destination.

The Bohol provincial government's aggressive promotion of ecotourism, along with the benevolence of Chinese businessmen and Philippine Special Ambassador to China Carlos Chan, have made possible night cruises aboard floating restaurants on the Loboc River.

Aptly dubbed by town Mayor Leon Calipusan as "Nature by day boulevard by night," the river lighting project, which costs P1.15 million, is said to be the first of its kind in the country.

As the project's main feature, some 450 lampposts and flood-lights were installed along the lush green riverbank, stretching almost three kilometers from the barangay of the centuries-old Loboc Church toward Busal hills.

The Amisil-built old stone church itself is bounded with floodlights creating a spectacular reflection on the river's calm waters. The two bailey bridges crossing the river are also lit up.

The play of lights lends a romantic air to the night cruise while one enjoys a dinner buffet of native food aboard the floating restaurant.

Known as the music capital of Bohol, the municipality of Loboc is home to the world-acclaimed Loboc Children's Choir. If one is lucky, a local band is on board the floating restaurant to render soft music.

This music-loving town started the river cruising aboard floating restaurants business some 15 years ago. It became an occasional side trip for tourists who come to Bohol either for its pristine white sand beaches or its world-renowned Chocolate Hills.

Now, tours would not ruin the experience of Loboc River Cruise as the tours lies along the path from the popular resorts of Panglao Island going to the Chocolate Hills.

According to Calipusan, the daytime river cruise attracts an average of 800 guests daily. The cruise made it hard for the floating restaurant operators and the municipal government to manage the traffic and congestion in the river.

A year ago, a floating restaurant operator introduced a demonstration cruise, to get away from the congestion on the regular upstream route.

A year ago, a floating restaurant operator introduced a demonstration cruise, to get away from the congestion on the regular upstream route.

The municipal government likewise embarked on the construction of a modern 120-meter docking pier for all the floating restaurants which is completely manned by security personnel to ensure that besides the tourists' office, a visitors' lounge and air-conditioned comfort rooms. The project cost about P10 million, which was in part funded by Chan, who is also special ambassador of the Philippines to China.

Chan also donated P2.5 million for the construction of a Children's Palace, which now serves as a music and training center for musical performances.

During the river cruises, tourists also have a chance to see the world's smallest primate, the tarsier that has its natural habitat in the forests near the Loboc River.

The Loboc River night cruise was officially launched on Thursday coinciding with the visit of Chan and officials of Jiangxi Province in China for the first Bohol-Jiangxi Friendship Day.

The concept of developing a night cruise along Loboc River was proposed by the Bohol Provincial Tourism Council, chaired by Nenet Deklaresan, which saw it as the best option to address the congestion of tourists during peak river cruising hours.

The proposal generated support from tourism stakeholders in the province and was presented by Gov. Erico Aumentado during the signing of a sisterhood agreement with Jiangxi Province Gov. Huang Zhiquan in Nanchang, China on May 6, 2006.

Aumentado, together with the Bohol delegation, were brought by their Chinese counterparts in Qiaohui Square in Nanchang that offers a view of the night cruise.

It was in this trip that ambassador Chan commitment to fund the riverbank lighting project. Chan commissioned the lighting experts from China to determine the requirements of Loboc River.

According to Calipusan, the river cruises has opened more opportunities for encouraging local residents and floating restaurant operators, their employees and musicians and in terms of town revenue.

Barter trading alive in Pontevedra

By Felipa P. Collos
Pontevedra, Capiz

EXPERIENCING PONTEVEDRA, a town in the first district of Capiz, during market days would make one think of stepping back in time. The people have retained the traditional way of bartering their products for their daily needs.

Established in 1855 as an independent town from Panay, Pontevedra was first named Cagayonan (which means milkfish because people went there like a swarm of ants during market days, according to its website. It was renamed by Spanish friar Gregorio Hernaiz after finding a striking resemblance of the place to his hometown in Pontevedra, Spain.

Just like the early inhabitants, residents from the upland areas still practice bringing their products and fishponds bring their harvests to swap for other products.

Jose Almonte of Sitio Bayog, Tacas, said his wife Sesalia always brought his catch of fish to the public market early morning on Thursday Day. When she came home, she had a kilo of rice, vegetables and root crops in her baskets, he said.

To promote the unique practice, the municipal government, headed by Mayor Jose Emilian Contreras, included bartering in selling among the major activities of the Cagayonanon Festival held on May 14-15. He said he would also focus on efforts to improve efficiency in aquaculture, fishery and farming.

Cameron, the eldest son of former Capiz Gov. Dinahan Contreras Contreras and the late Rosella Barrera, saw barter trading as an opportunity to invent a festival that depicted the positive characteristics of the community. Pontevedra is a place where people celebrate the abundance of natural resources and the positive traditions of the Cagayonanons, he said.

The municipal government decided that the Cagayon gayonan should be a commemorative event, and not merely a selfish one.

Late SPORTS

Tigers keep lead, devour Dragons

By Jasmine W. Payo

ANTIPOLO CITY—JASON DIXON kept the Coca-Cola offense together in the closing minutes as the Tigers held on for a 94-87 escape over the rallying Welcoat Dragons and strengthened their hold of the top spot in the Smart-PBA Fiesta Conference yesterday at the Smart Araneta Coliseum.

Dixon unloaded 14 of his game-high 26 points in the last seven minutes to put the Tigers back on top, 80-86, after the Tigers blew a 16-point advantage, 77-61, early in the fourth period.

"We played them already; we know they're a dangerous team," said Tigers coach Binky Recto. "But we stuck together all through out. We hung in there when Welcoat made a comeback. We helped each other out."

Dixon, who nailed 10 of 14 attempts from the field, grabbed 10 rebounds, five assists, two steals and one block to lead the Tigers to their second straight win for an 8-4 record.

The 6-foot-3 Donald Copeland posted 18 points and four assists in his second outing after replacing second import Gee Gervera.

"It was a good win; the players did a good job offensively and defensively," said Recto of his Tigers, who are vying for an outright semifinal berth.

The Dragons skidded in their fourth straight setback for a 3-9 card.

Dixon and Copeland [illegible] up his 40 points, 16 more than Dragons reinforcement Marquis Gaines and Corey Justice, who combined for 24 numbers.

The Tigers last threatened at 87-86, before a 10-0 run by Welcoat, five assists, two steals and one block to lead the Tigers to their second straight win for an 8-4 record.

The 6-foot-3 Donald Copeland posted 18 points and four assists in his second outing after replacing second import Gee Gervera.

"It was a good win; the players did a good job offensively and defensively," said Recto of his Tigers, who are vying for an outright semifinal berth.

The Dragons skidded in their fourth straight setback for a 3-9 card.

Dixon and Copeland [illegible] up his 40 points, 16 more than Dragons reinforcement Marquis Gaines and Corey Justice, who combined for 24 numbers.

The Tigers last threatened at 87-86, before a 10-0 run by Welcoat, five assists, two steals and one block to lead the Tigers to their second straight win for an 8-4 record.

Three more buffer free throws from Rinjon Bautista kept the Tigers far from reach, 92-87, with 9.1 seconds left.

Bautista wound up as the top scoring local for the Tigers with 14, while Alex Cabagnot added 12 markers.

Jay-Jo Reyes registered with 18 points for the Dragons, who also outrebounded a slim 50-34 loss against the Tigers in the first round.

The scores:

COCA-COLA 94—Dixon 26, Copeland 14, Barroca 11, Cabagnot 12, Ildefonso 10, Mocon gal 9, Cubberly 4, Belasco 3, Demusmundo 0, Cuntapay 0, Ayo 0, Baltazar 0, Bautista 14, Ildefonso

SMART

Buddy

D2 lang me marami kakampi!

WITH OVER A MILLION PLACES NA PUWEDENG MAGPA-LOAD

D2 lang me walang sawang!

D2 lang me tagong nanonood!

D2 lang me bukang-buka!

Kaya D2 na me
Sa Smart Buddy!

www.smart.com.ph

Aplus METRO
Edited by Error G. Dipanpil
Text or post feedback: inquirer.metro@gmail.com/txtmetro to 2365 (Globe) or 300 (Smart)

Wage hike takes effect on June 14

But TUCP says P20 'a pittance'

By Margaux C. Grig

METRO MANILA WORKERS WILL START RECEIVING a P20 increase in their minimum daily wage starting June 14.

A labor insider said the new minimum wage mandated by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board (RTWPB) should have been implemented four to five weeks ago.

But the source, who requested anonymity because he was not authorized to give information, said the delay was caused by questions raised by labor representatives about a provision in the wage order.

As a result, the publication of the order in newspapers of general circulation, a requirement for implementation, was postponed.

Florencio Bellaniño Jr. of the National Wages and Productivity Commission (NWPC) said the wage order was published in yesterday's newspapers.

"The wage order, which was approved on May 16, should be implemented 15 days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation," the source said.

But labor representatives in the NWPC objected to the provision requiring employers using independent contractors from the wage order.

"This means that anything produced locally can be classified as indigenous. In effect, all employers could be exempted," the source said.

Alan Aguilar, spokesperson of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), said they would not file an appeal against the wage order because it had not been published.

"We want to question the adequacy of the wage order and its legality," Aguilar said in a phone interview.

The TUCP said the P20 wage hike granted was a pittance compared to the P82 they asked for to their petition.

CHEAP THRILLS
Young Marikina residents take a leisurely carabao ride by the banks of the city's Tumana River

3 injured in Quezon City car crash

By Marlon Ramos

THREE YOUNG men were seriously hurt early Friday when their car plowed through several cones in their path as well as the concrete railing of a bridge in Project 4, Quezon City.

The victims were identified as Arnel Ulzat Jr., 20, of BF Homes, Quezon City; Pio Carlo Alberto, 21, of Project 8, Quezon City; and Art Gregorio, 20, a resident of San Carlos, Pangasinan.

Police Inspector Jaime Dominguez, Quezon City traffic investigator, said the victims were brought to the Quirino Memorial Medical Center for treatment of injuries in different parts of their bodies.

He said a case of reckless imprudence resulting in damage to property would be filed against Ulzat, who was driving.

Dominguez said residents in the area saw the black Honda Civic driven by Ulzat running at a high speed as it passed through Kalayaan Avenue, Barangay Ilocos about 12:45 a.m.

"Witnesses said the victim seemed to be cutting after two motorcycles when it crashed into a row of cones," Dominguez told the Inquirer.

The impact threw Ulzat out of the car.

Dominguez said the car's engine and transmission box were detached from the vehicle's main body.

Dell™ recommends Windows Vista® Home Premium
DELL™ HAS ARRIVED!
intel Centrino Performance to go
DELL™ XPS™ M1330 LAPTOP
XPS
Php 87,995*
DELL intel

Capture summer's coolest colors with the hottest deal under the SUN
Comes with interchangeable covers!
Get 3 camera phones, 3 lines*
24/7 Call & Text Unlimited**
750*** FREE texts to other networks
All for ₱999/month
NOKIA 2600c Key Features:
Nokia 2330 also available at Plan 250 and Group Plan 999
12-month bidding period.
Hurry to The Sun Shop and apply now!
NOKIA
www.sunvalue.com.ph Hotline: 291-8080
SUN CELLULAR
Better network, better value.

Printing the PRINT TOWN

Lack of security detail worries school officials in Metro

By Alexis Romero

MANY PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN Metro Manila lack the necessary security personnel, according to a Quezon City Schools official.

In a media forum yesterday, Cora Rubio, deputy superintendent of the Quezon City Schools Division, said officials of educational institutions were concerned about growing fraternity violence and the presence of drugs in their campuses.

"Many of our schools have no security guards. Usually, it's the janitor that serves as security guard and, if there are guards, they are too few. Hindi nga PNP? Subito said. Una pressure akong ceasar guard a school's premises on a 24-hour basis, she added.

"Ideally we should be able to inspect the bags of students. But there is no provision for security guard and, if there are guards, they are too few. Hindi nga should be allowed on school grounds," Rubio said.

In the past, the said Parent-Teacher Associations collected fees to pay security guards before the DepEd banned the practice.

Some local governments have provided a few schools with guards. Those that did not have any called the Philippine National Police for help.

PNP Directorate for Operations chief Director Alberto Alarcio said they would designate patrol teams in areas around schools, especially those that had been scenes of violence incidents in the past.

He added that they would also ask the help of barangay council to maintain peace and order in areas in and around schools.

Police maintenance details would also be set up.

Millions of students are expected to troop back to school on June 10 for the start of a new academic year.

5 Indians charged with kidnapping, illegal detention

By Tina G. Santos

FIVE INDIAN NATIONALS WERE charged yesterday with kidnapping and serious illegal detention in a Manila regional trial court.

Gurdarshan Singh alias Tony, Darshan Singh Sandhu, Jaddeder Singh Bhangu alias Harnal Singh Gill, Gurmeet Singh and Hosin Singh alias Ron Bombay allegedly abducted Maldeo Singh, a fellow Indian trader in 2000, and detained him for three days, police said.

Assistant City Prosecutor Aries Gerald Ilao Agar asked the court not to allow the suspects to post bail.

The incident happened on Dec. 22, 2000, around 9:30 a.m., in Sta. Ana, Manila. The victim said he had just finished collecting loan payments and was about to board his motorcycle when a L300 van blocked his path and two men ordered him at gunpoint to board the car.

Inside were the five suspects who allegedly ordered the two armed men to blindfold and bogie the victim. Maldeo said the kidnappers demanded a P50 million ransom that was later reduced to P6 million. The complainant was released on Dec. 25 after the ransom was paid.

Justice, Filipino style

ON TARGET
Ramon Tulfo

WHEN I READ ABOUT THE news that a Japanese would-be is a Filipino terrorist in the back of the cargo carousel at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia), I was furious.

I said the Japanese should immediately be deported and never allowed to return.

But now, I'm taking up the cudgels for the Japanese, Toru Tanaka, a frequent visitor to this country, who has been in the immigration jail for two months.

Tanaka is charged in court with serious physical injuries. If he is found guilty, he will serve time in jail before he is deported.

The Japanese wants to post bail while his trial is going on, but the Bureau of Immigration wants to keep and have because the complainant, Maria Esperanza Garcia, is well placed.

Garcia is the daughter of Cebu Gov. Duano, a cousin ally of President Gloria, and niece of Provincial Governor Garcia, and general manager of the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS).

Tanaka, through his lawyer, Teresita Mendoza, has asked that he be allowed to post bail.

He has become very ashy and is asking to be taken to a hospital, but his request has not been granted.

Tanaka has a case in hiring that doesn't bail because he's a diplomat. If he's not wanted, his lay might have to be acquainted.

By all means, Immigration Chief the consequences of his alleged abusive act—if indeed he did what he is accused of doing.

A physical injuries case is not drug trafficking, murder or kidnapping; it is a bailable offense.

For crying out loud, let's give Tanaka a fair shake and allow him to post bail for his temporary liberty.

Latest update: Tanaka was released on bail two yesterday upon representation by Transferring Mr. Kay Tulfo" with the Bureau of Immigration—BI).

* * *

We Filipinos about to high heavens when our compatriots are jailed and not given a fair trial in other countries.

But are we fair to foreigners accused of wrongdoing here?

Visit the immigration detention cell and see how foreigners facing deportation are being treated. Listen to the charges against them, like sleeping with another man's wife, a charge most macho Pinoys are guilty of.

We Filipinos should stop to boast the Golden Rule: Do to your neighbors what you want your neighbors do to you.

* * *

In this country, justice tilts heavily in favor of the rich and the influential in a case of rich vs poor.

Vanessa Enriquez, 23, and Jessel Rivas, 25, both domestic helpers, are in jail awaiting trial for qualified theft filed by their former employers, Maria Elena Mendoza, of Quezon, Rizal.

Mendoza has accused the two maids of stealing P5,000 and jewelry from her.

But out a single piece of evidence, whether money or jewelry, was found in their persons when they were searched by PO2 Jeffrey Asuncion.

Despite that, the cop filed the qualified theft case in the office of Prosecutor Jerome Siley, who in turn, filed it in court.

Enriquez's parents, who are very poor, went to Calaca from Calapan, Mindoro, and gave Mendoza P15,000 so she would drop the case.

But the two girls continue to rot in jail.

Enriquez's doctor died of a heart attack due to the apparently blatant oppression of her daughter.

How, are you still wondering why the Pinoy People's Army is winning supporters and sympathizers every day?

METROBRIEFS

Pasig cop linked to truck hijack case

A PASIG City policeman detained at the Eastern Police District (EPD) is facing a robbery charge after he was identified as one of at least two men who allegedly hijacked a Pandesal truck containing goods worth almost P2 million, PO1 Pio A. Cervantes, 32, and a barangay tanod, Pasig City resident, was arrested by elements of the Pasig City police on Thursday afternoon, city police chief Senior Supt. Francisco Uyami said. Cervantes, with a commission, allegedly distracted driver Mario Cunanan and his helper as the vehicle was cruising on F. Legaspi Street, Barangay Maybunga, Pasig City on Monday night, when officer PO2 Nolly Lipata said. According to Cunanan, Cervantes and a still unidentified companion blocked their truck with their white L300 vehicle and ordered all three of them to get out. The driver said Cervantes was wearing a cap with a police insignia and mail uniform. One of the helpers, Nick Pacheco, said he heard Cervantes tell somebody on his cellphone to "hurry up" and take the truck containing canned goods worth around P1.83 million. Cunanan said Cervantes warned their companions and cautioning a three-hour ride that took them to Batangas. SEE ALSO Gigabyte City, where they were dumped at around 11:30 p.m. on Monday. The Pandesal employees immediately sought the assistance of local officials to get back to Manila. They positively identified Cervantes as one of the suspects from photographs in police files. The suspect, who was arrested at the EPD headquarters on Thursday afternoon, denied involvement in the robbery. Khalbo L. Abas

22-hour water cutoff in Valenzuela, Malabon

SOME areas of Valenzuela and Malabon will lose no water for 22 hours starting at 9 p.m. tonight until 7 p.m. tomorrow. The water service interruption is due to the interconnection of the 200-mm and 450-mm lines in the existing 900-mm pipeline along Mac-Arthur Highway corner Pio Valenzuela St., Valenzuela City. The areas that will have no water for 22 hours are the following: In Valenzuela: Barangay Malinta, Barangay Karuhatan, Barangay Ninoy, Barangay Paso, Barangay Arkong Bato, Barangay Polasan, Barangay Pulo, Barangay Poblacion, Barangay Pamplona Uno, Barangay Bahayang, Barangay Veinte, Barangay Tagalag, Barangay Marulas, Barangay Isla, Barangay Maysilo, Barangay Dalandanan, Barangay Gen. T. de Leon, Barangay Ilaya, Barangay Dalandanan, Barangay Marcos, SM City Valenzuela, Gaisano Grand Hospital, Bambinos Espalla Hospital, Hernandez Hospital, Charter Water District, Marcelo Water District, Polo General Hospital, San Miguel Corporation, Coronet Bottling Corporation, and Valenzuela Sanitarium Hospital. In Malabon: Barangay Maysilo, Barangay Santolan and Barangay Panghulo. The repair and maintenance works are part of Maynilad's continuing program to upgrade and improve its service. Affected customers are advised to store water good for the duration of the water service interruption. They may also call Maynilad Water Hotline 1626.

Globe

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!
TM
Pinakamura sa Text Mundo

ANG PABORITO N'YONG TEXT OFFERS, PWEDE NA'NG GLOBE TO TM AT TM TO GLOBE

GLOBE OFFERS

EverybodyTXT20

P20 LANG! 10 TEXTS TO OTHER NETWORKS + 100 TEXTS GLOBE TO GLOBE & TM
TEXT **ETXT 20** TO **2868**

SuliTXT15

P15 LANG! 100 TEXTS GLOBE TO GLOBE & TM
TEXT **SULITXT 15** TO **2868**

UNLITXT All Day 20*

P20 LANG! UNLIMITED TEXTS GLOBE TO GLOBE & TM
TEXT **UNLITXT20** TO **2870**

TM OFFERS

EVERYBODYTXT 10

P10 LANG! 5 TEXTS TO OTHER NETWORKS + 55 TEXTS TM TO TM & GLOBE
TEXT **ETXT 10** TO **2868**

SULITXT 10

P10 LANG! 75 TEXTS TM TO TM & GLOBE
TEXT **SULITXT 10** TO **2868**

TODO TEXT P15

P15 LANG! UNLIMITED TEXTING TM TO TM & GLOBE
TEXT **TM15** TO **2824**

Minimum P1.00 maintaining balance is required for Globe prepaid and TM subscribers. Texts sent to Globe and TM numbers only. Get texters one vertical. Promo period is from Mar 23 to Jun 21, 2008. Pre-EVAT-VAT Prices Mar 2010. Taxes as of 2008.

Globe

NGA
ANG PWE
AT TM
PATI CALL

SAKTO

10 CENTAVOS

Ang laki ng matitipid mo. Mas t

Simple lang gamitin.

Kung naka-Globe ka, palitan ng 232 ang 0 sa umpisa ng
(ex. 0917xxxxxxx to 232917xxxxxxx

Kung naka-TM ka, palitan ng 803 ang 0 sa umpisa ng nu
(ex. 0906xxxxxxx change to 803906xxx

**Promo is open to Globe Prepaid and Postpaid subscribers and to TM*
Promo is not available while subscriber is on international roam
Minimum maintaining balance to make a call is P150 for Globe Prepaid subscribers and

POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

TM

Pinalakas na Touch Mobile

YON, 'DI LANG TEXT
DENG GLOBE TO TM
I TO GLOBE...
S, PWEDE NA!

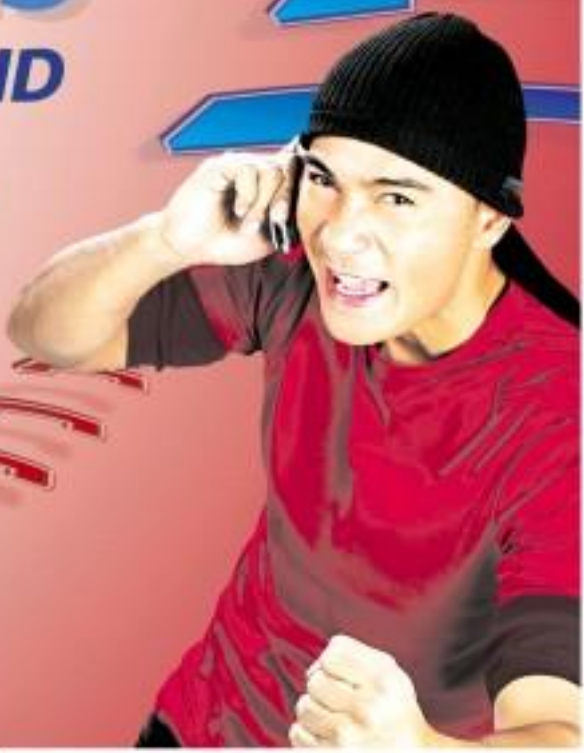
CALLS
PER SECOND

atagal ang load mo.

umber na tatawagan.

umber na tatawagan.
xxxx)

ubscribers
ning.
P1.50 for TM subscribers



Promo is from May 9 to July 19, 2008. Per CTS-NTC Permit No. 3063, Series of 2008.

Globe
ANG LAKI NG MATITIPID MO. MAS TATAGAL ANG LOAD MO.
SAKTOCALLS
10 CENTAVOS PER SECOND
'MACHO GODFATHERS'
SA ISANG BAHAY SA QUEZON CITY, MAKATITIG SI PETER SA KAHALAN NANG BIGLANG...
BITOY! CESSY! INGA! GOLI! BAKIT PO?!
KUNG ANG INGA BABAENG N TROPOL MAY FWBY GODMOTHER, ANG INGA LALAKE, MERONG MACHO GODFATHER.
MUNYANG MAY PROBLEMA KA!
poof!
poof!
KAKI WAS EOL. AWIS NA AWIS KO NA ANG BOSES NG MANAY KONG SI MARIETTE. KAYA LANG, DI KO MATAWAGAN. PAG TUMAWAG AKO, ANG LAKI KO KALTAS SA LOAD KO.
HAHAHA KA KAKI SA PER MINUTE CHARGING NA P6.50! TI MO UMAKU ALAM NA DI SAKTO SA ISANG MINUTO TAWAG AKO DI BA?
MALIMIT, ANG INGA CELLS MO WALA PE GUMUGONG ONE MINUTE.
TALAGA? DI KO NAPANSIN YON HA.
BRAYT, YAN LANG I MISS YOU AT I LOVE YOU KO KAY MARIETTE. HOME AWAITO YUN? PERO ANG CHARGE DI TO P6.50 PA EH!
AY BAHAHAHAHA! ANG LOAD MO 64 SECONDS NA HINET MO! MAHAL BAYAN! TAMA BA YUN?!
SOBRA ANG NAGINGIL SA 'KIN!!!
KAYA MAS SAKTO CALLS NA MU 10 CENTAVOS PER SECOND LANG ANG BAWAS SA LOAD MO.
PER SECOND?! OMSIM TOTOO BA YAN?!
OO. PER SECOND! DI BA 60 ISANG MINUTO MAY 60 SECONDS?
KA SAKTO CALLS PER SECOND ANG BAWASAN NG LOAD.
1 = 60
MINUTE SECONDS
HALIMBAWA
HABA-CUTE KA KAY MARIETTE. 64 SECONDS NA TAWAG. P1.80 LANG ANG BAWAS SA LOAD MO. KUMBAGA SA P6.50 DATI.
64 SECONDS NA TAWAG = 10 CENTAVOS = P1.80 LANG
TOTOO BA YAN?
SAKTO MGA 'EH, WALANG DAYA 'YAN!
HALIMBAWA
TUMAWAG KA PABA MALAMBING KT MARIETTE NG GOOD NIGHT BE BE KO! I LOVE YOU AT ANG BAWAT SEGUN SA ULO MO! 64 SECONDS PALA SI BAY. P1.80 LANG ANG BAWAS NA LOAD MO, AMIS NUEVA KAYAS P6.50 DATI.
10 SECONDS NA TAWAG = 10 CENTAVOS = P1.80
HMMM... EDI BAE SABIHAN MYAN, YUNG SAKTONG SECONDS NA GINAMIT KO LANG NA TAWAG ANG BINAWAS SA 'KIN!
SAKTO! MAKUHA MO!
EH PANO YUN, GLOBE SYA TM AKO?
WALANG PROBLEMA YAN! DIBA ANG SAKTO CALLS PWEDENG GLOBE TO TM AT TM TO GLOBE!
OK SIR! PAG NAG-GLOBE O TM KO... MAS MALAKI ANG MATITIPID KO! ... MAS TATAGAL NG LOAD KO. AKO NA MISMO ANG MAGSASABI SA MGA KAIBIGAN KONG MALALAMBING NA BE BE KO!
PANO BA ANG SAKTO CALLS?
SIMPLE LANG GANITO. PARA SA GLOBE, PILITAN LANG NG 232 ANG O SA UNAHAN NG NUMERONG TINATAWAGAN.
PILITAN ANG O SA UNAHAN NG 232
AT PARA SA TM, PILITAN LANG NG 803 ANG O SA UNAHAN NG NUMERONG TINATAWAGAN.
PILITAN ANG O SA UNAHAN NG 803
ANG LAKI NG MATITIPID MO!
ANG DALI LANG PALA!
KAYA MAS SAKTO CALLS KA!
PARA MAS MALAKI ANG MUNDONG MAABOT MO!

Chinese troops battle rain to drain quake lake

CHENGDU—CHINESE TROOPS racing to drain an "earthquake lake" made substantial progress digging a diversion channel and used explosives to ease a mud and rock dam's grow way.

The landslide-blocked river in Tangjiashan in southwest China is now the most pressing danger after an earthquake devastated the region on May 12.

Vice Premier Wu Yi, an official investigator pinpointed the poor design and construction of at least one of the many schools that collapsed during the 7.9-magnitude quake, killing thousands of children.

The death toll from the quake is more than 68,000 and is sure to rise with nearly 20,000 missing. Aftershocks have toppled 430,000 houses, most already uninhabitable.

A massive relief effort to provide food, water and clothing for millions and rebuild houses and infrastructure is expected to take up to three years.

At the unstable Tangjiashan lake, hundreds of troops have removed more than a third of the earth for a channel intended to ease pressure from the rising water in the mountainous province of Sichuan, an official spokesperson said on Friday.

"The work on the blocked lake is going smoothly and in risk pace, it should be completed soon," said Chen Hua, an official from nearby Mianyang city in relayed in the drainage effort.

Zhou declined to say when the operation was likely to finish. But up to 150,000 residents downstream had moved to higher ground—usually hillsides close to where they were living before—as much a surge of water if the blockage suddenly gave way.

"At this stage, the situation is under control, but we're not in place this contingency plan to minimize any possible damage," Zhou said.

Military news agency said the water level was nearly 23 meters below the lowest point of the barrier, which experts have said could give way quickly once breached. Troops have also built escape paths in the event that happens, Xinhua said.

Post-quake reconstruction work has only just begun, and tens of thousands of survivors are now threatened by more than 30 quake lakes, formed by landslides that could break through the natural dams, flooding downstream towns and reservoirs.

Donations from home and abroad had reached $5.26 billion by Thursday. China has also mobilized 130,000 troops and police to provide disaster relief, including helicopters to transport relief goods and doctors and Beijing has sent 200 soldiers to the area.

Japan had ordered plans for its military to fly tents and blankets to China after messages on Chinese Internet sites linked the plan to Tokyo's World War II invasion of the country. Reuters

Forced by court, US issues climate change assessment

NEW YORK—THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION released a climate change assessment on Thursday—four years late and pushed forward by a court order—that said human-induced global warming will likely lead to problems like droughts in the US West and stronger hurricanes.

President George W. Bush's stance on the issue has evolved from denying climate science to acknowledging that global warming is happening. In March, watchdog groups said Bush's decision to intervene to setting up political roadblocks was part of a pattern of meddling in environmental science.

The "Scientific Assessment of the Effects of Global Change on the United States" released on Thursday synthesized previous reports, including those by the government's climate change science program and last year's work by the United Nation's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

It is intended to give US government agencies and lawmakers in Congress a single document to refer to when forming climate policy.

The assessment was praised by environmental groups at the forefront of the lawsuit that led to the court order forcing the administration to issue the report by the end of May.

"Many of the federal scientists who were allowed to do their work aren't," Dante Scigli, climate program director of the Union for Concerned Citizens, said by telephone.

But she criticized the administration for waiting until the last months of the Bush presidency to release the assessments.

A 1990 law, the Global Change Research Act, requires the government to do an assessment every global warming science five years. The last one had been issued in 2000 during President Bill Clinton's administration.

The Bush administration has resolved to get large-emitting countries to agree to nonbinding goals on reducing output of carbon dioxide and other gases blamed for trapping heat in the Earth's atmosphere and altering the climate.

But Bush has opposed regulating greenhouse gases and withdrew the United States from the Kyoto Protocol, saying it would hurt the economy.

The Kyoto Protocol binds some 37 industrialized nations to limits on their greenhouse gas emissions between 2008 and 2012, but developing countries which produce their caps to sell their unused quotas to other states looking thrifty.

By most counts, the United States is the world's top emitter of carbon dioxide but is expected to be overtaken soon by China.

In 2006, the Bush government was accused of censoring its scientists on global warming, such as Texas' reports James Hansen, which led to the firing of an official at the space agency.

Sharon Hays, the White House associate director, said Thursday's document of kind "is greater focus on what scientists know about climate change impacts in the United States" than the 2007 reports by the UN panel.

Siegel, echoing the sentiments of many watchdog groups, said it is clear that the government had the assessments. It should launch a top-level study program on greenhouse gases and federal limits on emissions to slow climate change.

"There it's time to actually do something about climate change," she said.

The Senate is expected to take up the leading climate bill next week, although the lawyers expect it to pass before the new administration comes in power.

Reuters

VIEW FROM MARS
The Surface Stereo Imager (right) on Mars's Phoenix Mars Lander acquired the individual images which were combined into this one view. The spacecraft successfully fired its eight final rockets sent from the wannabee that kept it folded up and protected from vibrations during the launch and landing. Preparations are now under way to partially fire the arms.

Europeans protest rising price of gas

PARIS—MARC SCHNEIDER has always been thrifty about gasoline. The high price of filling up made it prohibitively expensive for Schneider, a middle-income office employee, to own anything bigger than a Fiat subcompact.

But with prices surging past 1.40 euros a liter in France (about $8.20 a gallon), Schneider's economics are headlines. He started taking the Metro to work and splitting the use of his car with two other women, to share fuel costs.

Gas prices that make drivers queasy at the pump are a relatively new occurrence in the United States, but high prices forced by expensive oil overall there had consumption long ago. (In many countries, governments taxes account for more than half the price.)

Protests broke out across the continent this week as irate petrol truckers clashed with riot police in Marseilles and truckers stopped traffic in London to demand government fuel rebates. On Thursday, the protests spread to truckers in the Netherlands and French farmers blocked the entrances to oil depots. Italian and Spanish fishermen were also planning strikes.

AFP

Puerto Rico gets starring role in Clinton drama

SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO—PUERTO Rican cannot vote for presidents in US general elections, but their Caribbean archipelago on Sunday has a starring role in White House hopeful Hillary Clinton's long-odds comeback bid.

Some 2.4 million citizens have a rare chance in the Democratic primary to make their voices heard in race level US politics, despite having little sway over the federal government that rules them, and no seats in Congress.

The former first lady, bidding to be the first female president of the United States, is hoping for a thumping turnout, to boost her hopes of beating rival Barack Obama in the nationwide popular vote.

"We are depending on the voters of Puerto Rico in our fight to secure the nomination," Clinton said in an e-mail to supporters.

"We have the opportunity to make history in the Puerto Rico primary."

Ahead of a lively campaign swing through the main island this weekend, Clinton on Thursday sprinkled a little rhetorical stardust, recounting the endorsement of Puerto Rican Grammy award-winning singer Ricky Martin.

Polling has been sparse on the mainly Spanish-speaking island, and political surveyors is difficult to gauge, but Clinton is tipped to see her backing and Latino voters to take a victory.

Obama has an eye on sticking into the island's 55 elected delegates in the Democratic national convention in August, and has history on his mind, in sight of his goal of being the first black party nominee.

The Illinois senator leads in every key metric of the epic Democratic battle, pledged delegates, top party officials or superdelegates, and nominating contests won.

But Clinton hopes to emerge from Puerto Rico and the last two contests in Montana and South Dakota on Tuesday leading the popular vote, to convince her party that she is the most viable Democratic to take on Republican John McCain.

Obama was only 46 delegates short on Thursday of the winning post of 2,026 delegates, according to independent website RealClearPolitics.

The Clinton camp however says that the number needed to grab the nomination is actually 2,130, including delegates stripped from Michigan and Florida, punished for moving their primaries forward into January.

The status of the voided elections is due to be thrashed out by a Democratic Party committee in Washington on Saturday.

The primary, and the seasonal presence of big-time American politicians, has sparked some debate about the island's political future.

One major party in Puerto Rico advocates remaining the current relationship with the United States, while another is pushing to become the 51st state. A third, smaller party favors independence.

Puerto Rico is a self-governing commonwealth of the United States under the authority of an elected governor, though its head of state is the US president.

Washington controls the island's interstate trade, customs, air and sea space, immigration laws and foreign relations. Puerto Rico have no voting rights in the House of Representatives or in the US Senate.

AFP

'Miracle' in Australia: Baby grows outside womb

SYDNEY—AN AUSTRALIAN DOCTOR on Friday hailed as a "miracle" a baby girl who survived a full-term pregnancy outside the womb.

Bolga Thangaraja was delivered by caesarean section at Darwin Private Hospital on Thursday after spending almost nine months growing inside her mother's right ovary—stretching the organ's tissue as thin as paper.

Obstetrician Andrew Miller said the chances of such a pregnancy producing a healthy baby were almost nil.

Asked whether the birth was miracle, Miller said: "Oh yes."

"It's an extraordinarily unusual circumstance and I am not aware of anyone who has seen a (full) term ovarian pregnancy as we have here," he told AFP.

"I deliver anything up to 500 babies a year but to actually see (it) ovaries seen anything like this before."

An ectopic pregnancy, in which the fetus develops outside the womb, usually involves the fertilized egg lodging in the fallopian tubes which link the ovaries to the uterus.

The condition places the woman's life at risk because of the likelihood the fetus will cause a ruptures resulting in pain and blood loss, and is usually resolved by a miscarriage or termination.

Miller said the condition had not been detected in this case because the mother, 34-year-old Meera Thangaraja, had not had early prenatal scans and had had a trouble-free pregnancy.

Until he performed the operation on Thursday he thought he would deliver the baby normally from the womb while also removing a large fibroid which scans had detected.

It was only after he made the incision that he realized that what doctors had misdiagnosed as a fibroid, or overgrowth of the muscle of the womb, was in fact the mother's womb and the baby was in the ovary.

AFP

MIRACLE Thangaraja with baby daughter Bolga, who spent almost nine months growing inside her mother's right ovary.

Who will clean the toilet? Italy rethinks stance on immigrants

By Stephen Brown

ROME—ITALIANS HAVE RELATively realized that Silvio Berlusconi's crackdown on illegal immigrants would deprive them of hundreds of thousands of foreigners who clean their homes and look after their children and elderly relatives.

Having elected the conservative media mogul to a third term as prime minister in April, thanks partly to his vows to crack down on illegal immigrants, they are now pleading for foreign cleaners, carers and nannies to be exempted.

Their pleas may be falling on deaf ears.

"Why should a housekeeper have rights but not a bricklayer?" asked Interior Minister Roberto Maroni, architect of draft laws to be rushed through parliament, which include counted sentences in Rome that the right-wing government may be frustrating more.

Italy sets a record low in immigration last year, new data shows, with 494,000 newcomers making a total 2.5 million out of a country of 58 million people.

Of those, the biggest groups were Romanians whom many locals blame for crime, especially Roma people.

Amnesty International roasted politicians and media against "racist language," saying, "Italy risks becoming a dangerous country not just for Roma and Romanians but for all of us."

The number of foreign domestic workers is impossible to verify because so many are illegal. But consumer groups estimate they total 1.7 million, of whom only 745,000 are registered with tax authorities and many do not even have residence permits.

In Rome alone 100,000 foreigners holding after the old and disabled are illegal, says consumer body Adoc, which gets calls from worried families "who don't want to live outside the law."

Some live in grim conditions, forced to sleep in the kitchen and have to sell 20 hours a day for 600-800 euros a month.

Ideas are swarm from countries like Peru, Ecuador, the Philippines and Romania, some of whom say they fear for their future under a government which includes the anti-immigrant Northern League, whose deputy leader is Maroni.

"I read the newspapers, I watch television, so I see what they want to do and of course I am worried about what will happen to me and my family," said one Filipina woman, who works as a home cleaner and babysitter—illegally, to her—in Milan.

Alluding to her own career, the 27-year-old said she arrived a year ago and her employer is helping her apply for residency.

"I want to have everything to stay like these people...the government, they make it even more difficult for us to try to be here," she said. "It looks impossible for us to make our home here because we are looked down upon."

The new measures will make illegal immigration a judicable offence, confiscate apartments rented to illegal immigrants, speed up expulsions, extend the time they can be held and vote some troops to patrol border crossings.

Some center-left opposition figures accuse Maroni of rushing out "improvised" legislation that plays on public fears of crime and could hurt military families with both parents working who need childcare or nurses for elderly or infirm relatives.

Reuters

The WORLD

Lilia Lorenzo B. Bueno

WB creates $1.2-B food fund

WASHINGTON—THE WORLD BANK HAS LAUNCHED A $1.2 billion program to fight the global food crisis, including $200 million in grants to poor countries facing the most dire needs.

The new program aims to speed up aid to those in need as "high food prices are making the human billion [people] vote potentially the bottom two billion," World Bank president Robert Zoellick said on Thursday.

The Bank also said it would boost its overall support for global agriculture next fiscal year to $6 billion—next year, up 50 percent.

Crop insurance and other assistance for small farmers in developing countries will be part of the program, Zoellick said in a media teleconference from the sidelines of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development.

In preparation for a UN-sponsored food crisis summit in Rome next week, Zoellick said he has emphasized "the need for a clear action plan."

Skyrocketing commodity prices in the past years have battered developing countries, whom food takes the lion's share of household income.

Rising food prices have sparked deadly unrest and rising malnutrition, and a number of countries have put limits on exports to try to feed their own populations.

The World Bank's announcement came as a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization found that high global food prices are a new fact of life.

The cost of feeding the family will remain far higher than in the past decade, even though prices should ease in coming years, the report said.

Zoellick, a former top US trade official who has made agriculture a priority since taking the helm of the poverty-fighting bank last July said the new program was aimed at supporting coordinated international efforts.

Most finance ministers agreed to a "new deal" for global food policy at the spring meetings of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund in April.

The new $1.2-billion rapid-response facility supports safety-net programs such as food for work, conditional cash transfers and school feeding for the most vulnerable.

It also provides support for food production by supplying seeds and fertilizers, improving irrigation for small farmers, and providing budget support to offset tariff reductions for food and other unexpected costs.

The first grants from the $500-million trust fund were approved on Thursday for Liberia, Haiti and Djibouti, with Liberia and Haiti receiving $30 million each and Djibouti $5 million.

The grant recipients were identified as high priority based on rapid needs assessments which have been completed in more than 20 countries, with another 15 ongoing.

Grants for Togo, Yemen and Tajikistan are expected to be awarded next month, the bank said.

"What's urgent and key," Zoellick said, "is that we immediately respond to the terrible human needs of the present crisis ensuring that millions don't fall into this process again, but also that we build a production response so we can transition this into an opportunity or we can make the African farmers better and not only feed Africa, but people around the world."

Dalberg International's senior policy advisor, Elizabeth Jones, welcomed the announcement.

"The World Bank has shown impressive leadership on the food crisis in the last few weeks," she said. "We need to see similar political commitment and serious response from next week's meeting in Rome."

US Agriculture Secretary Ed Schafer, who will lead the US delegation to the three-day FAO-world food security conference that opens on Tuesday in Rome, said he would propose biotechnology as a strategy to boost agricultural production.

According to a study released on Thursday by the US Government Accountability Office, agricultural productivity in sub-Saharan Africa, as measured by grain yield, is only about 40 percent of that of the rest of the world's developing countries, and the gap has widened over the years. AFP

AFTER a taxidermists rests, the hoopoe shows above feeding its young, has been named Israel's ornithological symbol.

UN food report criticizes biofuels for rising prices

NEW YORK—AGRICULTURE SECRETARY Edward T. Schafer is preparing to walk into a hailstorm of criticism over US biofuels policy when he meets with world leaders this week to discuss the global food crisis next week.

Schafer took the offensive at a news conference on Thursday that discussed the food summit, planned for Rome. He said an analysis by the agriculture department had demonstrated the history of production was responsible for only 3 to 5 percent of the increase in global food prices, while biofuels had reduced consumption of crude oil by a million barrels a day.

"We think that policy-wise in the United States of America—and certainly in the rest of the world—as we see the price of oil and petroleum escalate dramatically beyond anyone's imagination, that one of the ways to deal with that is to produce biofuels which are renewables, better for the environment and help lower that cost," he said.

Schafer's remarks come as ethanol and biofuels are coming under increasing criticism from foreign leaders and members of Congress, as gasoline prices climb in the developed world and malnutrition and hunger threaten to spread to the poorest nations.

Just hours before his comments, a major report was released in Paris that urged countries to reconsider biofuels policies in the wake of soaring food prices.

"The energy security, environmental and economic benefits of biofuels production based on agricultural commodity feed stocks are at best modest, and sometimes even negative," says the report, prepared by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

The UN report, the global agricultural outlook through 2017, said prices for farm crops will remain substantially higher over the next decade because of fundamental changes in demand, though they will gradually decline from current highs.

Prices for vegetable oils are expected to remain the highest, 40 percent above the average from 1998 to 2007, wheat, corn and skim milk powder are anticipated to be 40 to 60 percent higher, sugar 30 percent, and beef and pork, about 20 percent. Biofuel production should account for about a third of the expected increases in prices for vegetable oils and grains.

The World Bank also announced that it would increase spending on agricultural and food programs to $6 billion in the coming fiscal year, which begins on July 1, up from $4 billion. AFP

Foreign minister adds to pressure on Olmert to quit

JERUSALEM—PRESSURE ON PRIME MINister Ehud Olmert of Israel to step down increased on Thursday when Tzipi Livni, his foreign minister and a senior member of the same political party, urged preparations for new elections.

Livni—who until now had kept silent about the high-profile corruption investigation engulfing Olmert—said their party, Kadima, was "at a point in which it must make decisions and prepare for any scenario, including early elections."

The remarks by Livni, who is a front-runner to succeed Olmert, seemed to be a political step intended to move Israeli politics into a post-Olmert era.

She suggested that Kadima hold primaries, saying that involving the public in the election of its new leadership could restore confidence in the party.

Olmert, who the police say is suspected of receiving illicit funds, has not been charged.

Livni's statement came a day after another member of the governing coalition, Defense Minister Ehud Barak, who leads the Labor Party, called on Olmert to step aside pending the outcome of the investigation. He also urged Kadima to act quickly to choose new leadership. If it does not, Barak said, he will work within parliament to set a date for early elections.

Livni's pronouncement was less emphatic than Barak's, but she did not call explicitly for Olmert to step aside. But her comments carry weight because she is the first senior member of Olmert's party in question his leadership during the current corruption inquiry. AFP

All eyes turn to palace for Nepal king's eviction

KATHMANDU—HOLED UP WITHIN HIS high-walled Narayanhiti palace, Nepal's King Gyanendra kept a studied silence 24 days after a historic assembly abolished his monarchy and gave him a two-week eviction order.

Quite when he will leave the pink-hued palace in the heart of Kathmandu is unclear although royal watchers said he was packing his bags and could leave on Friday.

The royal flag was taken down early Thursday without hours of a constituent assembly voting to sweep away the monarchy and turn this Himalayan nation into a republic, ending 240 years of dynastic rule.

Gyanendra has a tight deadline to vacate the Narayanhiti palace, which the assembly—now dominated by former rebel Maoists—has agreed to turn into a museum.

"He is said to be leaving the palace on Friday," said Bishnu Shrestha, who is editor of the royal-watching Nepali-language weekly Jana Sandesh.

The king has yet to comment on the constitutional assembly vote that ended his rule.

Accustomed 1,500 army soldiers guard the king in his palace, but an army spokesperson said they were ready to pull back the security when the government orders.

For now, the palace and its surrounding roads are heavily guarded by riot police. Demonstrations have been banned, but revellers celebrating Nepal's new republic status skirmished with police in Thursday on the road leading to the complex.

Police baton-charged and tear-gassed the revelers when they tried to shelter a statue of the tortured king's father in order to put a national flag on it.

Nepal has been labouring for weeks with rumors over the king's plans, with each day's newspaper front-page palace in recent days—including a weekend trip to his summer home and a drive to his sister's home for tea—watched with bated breath.

Talked like this king. The monarch's fate happened with the previous king," said Komal Sharma, a shopkeeper in the capital. AFP

A PHOTO to be used in the June 2008 National Geographic Magazine article "Stonehenge" received on May 21 shows lights in nearby Amesbury set low-hanging clouds aglow over Stonehenge. New discoveries there shed light on the original purpose of the monument.

Stonehenge used as cemetery from the beginning

AT LEAST PART OF THE MYSTERY of Stonehenge may have now been solved: it was from the beginning a monument to the dead.

New radiocarbon dates from human cremation burials among and around the brooding stones England's Salisbury Plain indicate that the site was used as a cemetery from 3000 B.C. until after the monument were erected around 2500 B.C., British archaeologists reported on Thursday.

What appeared to be the head of a stone mace, a symbol of authority, was found in one grave, the archaeologists said, indicating that this was probably a cemetery for the ruling dynasty responsible for erecting Stonehenge.

"It's now clear that burials were a major component of Stonehenge to all its main stages," said Dr. Mike Parker Pearson, an archaeologist at the University of Sheffield in England.

Some scholars have contended that the enigmatic stones, surrounded by a ditch and earthen banks in concentric circles, more than likely marked a sacred place of healing.

In a teleconference with reporters, Parker Pearson described three burials of burned bones and teeth that were dated in recent weeks. Researchers estimated that up to 240 people were buried there, all as cremation deposits. Other evidence from the British Isles shows that skeletal burials were rare at this time and that cremation was the custom for the elite.

Another Sheffield archaeologist, Andrew Chamberlain, noted one reason to think that the Stonehenge burials were for persons of a single elite family. The clue, he said, is the small number of burials in the earliest period and the larger numbers in later centuries, as offspring would have multiplied.

Given the monumental surroundings, Parker Pearson said, "one has to assume anyone buried there had some grand credentials."

The earliest burial to be buried came from a pit at the edge of the stone monument; it dates to more or less 3000 B.C. The second burial dates to around 2900 B.C. The most recent one is from around the time the first arrangement of stones appeared on the plain, about 2500 B.C. It was previously believed that the site was a burial ground for only a century after 2700 B.C., well before the stones' large stones were put in place.

Although most of the cremated remains were recovered decades ago, Parker Pearson said, it is only in recent years that improved methods of radiocarbon dating have made it possible to analyze burned bones. AYT

US court says polygamy kids must be given back to parents

AUSTIN, TEXAS—THE TEXAS SUPREME Court ruled on Thursday that 468 children seized from a polygamist sect must be returned to their parents, saying state child welfare officials had overstepped their authority.

The ruling upheld a lower court's finding last week that Texas child welfare officials failed to prove the children were in immediate danger when they were taken from the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (FLDS).

Texas police and welfare officials raided the exclusive sect's sprawling compound near the small town of Eldorado on April 3 and took the girls and boys into state custody amid allegations of systemic sexual and physical abuse.

Officials said girls were being "groomed" to accept sex with their middle-aged "spiritual husbands" as soon as they hit puberty and boys were being indoctrinated to perpetuate the cycle of abuse.

Sect members believe that plural marriage is a way to get to heaven.

But despite the shocking allegations there later yet is no charges or arrests in the case. Police say the investigation is ongoing.

The Texas Department of Family Protective Services, which oversees the office of Child Protection Services (CPS), issued a statement promising to "take immediate steps to comply" with the ruling. AFP

WHAT'S INSIDE

■ Lakers fight back to oust Spurs, claim West crown /A36

SPORTS

Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ochoa

68 days to the 29th Summer Olympics Beijing 2008

Lady Falcons sweep Lady Eagles, snatch Shakey's V-League volleyball championship crown /A33

A GRITTY performance by Benjie Tuazo earns the Ex. Bendan trackster the boys long jump gold medal. EDU PUNZALAN

Boxer claims javelin gold

By Cedelf P. Tagas, Contributor

ASNIE ALBASIA'S COMPETITIVE NATURE and willingness to stay in top shape once again put her on top.

Illustrating her rare week break by successfully crusing over to her first loss, substitute Philippines amateur boxing's golden girl created a stir yesterday when she awarded the women's javelin throw gold medal in the National Track and Field Open Championships at the RIZAL Memorial Stadium.

The 21-year-old Albasia, a former varsity star at the University of the East but is representing TMS Ship Agencies in this three-day event, took the title with a 33. 35.m effort and held her ultra-close cousin in women's heptathlon Albasia also bagged a bronze in long jump Thursday.

The results, however, belied Albasia's plan for dominance yesterday.

"I just wanted to work out before we resume training in the women's boxing team on Monday" said the two-time Southeast Asian Games gold medalist, who is gearing up for the World Boxing Championships in October.

"I didn't want to waste the time doing nothing and I don't feel awful I don't do strenuous physical activities," added Albasia, who early ruled the women's flyweight division of the National Open Amateur Boxing Championships two weeks ago in Iloilo City.

Beating the limelight with Albasia on the penultimate day of the meet were TMS' teammates Mercedita Manipol, who followed up her women's 3,000m victory with a gold medal in the 10,000m race in 36 minutes 53.66 seconds. Manipol was gunning for her

SALE

up to 70% off

adidas

MAY 23 – JUNE 29, 2008 in all adidas shops nationwide

PHILIPPINE AMATEUR GOLF

Weary Aunzo defuses Asistio power, books quarters berth

By Manny S. Canillo

BACOLOD—DESPITE FATIGUE CAUSED BY TRAVEL AND EXTENDED PLAY, Perelle Aunzo has managed to remain consistent—and deadly.

Playing in his fourth straight tournament in four weeks, the 29-year-old yesterday booked two varying wins to secure the quarterfinals of the 2008 Philippine Amateur golf championships at the tough-as-nails Hacienda Isa golf course.

Aunzo had a cold-biting duel with power-hitting Teofilo Asistio in their 9-and-16 match in the afternoon, as almost all holes were decided by birdies, and not even rumbling, sore biceps on rumor, in a 2-and-1 victory that sealed his place in the next round.

Coming down 3-bds on Nos. 2 and 4 to open up against Asistio, Aunzo soon relinquished control the rest of the way, setting up a clash with a giant killing Mormont, Jay Yang, who conquered national team member Mark Melancio in 19 holes.

"I'm really tired," Aunzo, who won two titles in Malaysia that snowballed that grueling spur, said in Filipino. He was in cruise control before tipping Jordan Torrecampo, 3 and 2, in the morning.

"But I have to go on and play."

The 18-year-old Yang, whose family moved to the bustling city six years ago and who knows this short gun like the back of his hand, birdied the first playoff hole, the No. 1, by sinking a 14-foot putt set up by a driver that left him 50 yards short of the green.

"I didn't expect to beat Fernando," Yang, who just started to like golf two years ago, said. "I just wanted to play my game."

Fernando's loss wiped out the entire National Caddies' Open Contributions, with second-seeded Jessie Mendoza getting the door in the first round after losing, 1-down, to Aniel Villoria.

But Terence Manamparan earned Villoria, 1-up in 21 holes, to make the quarterfinals against reigning IRR champion Stefen Bayron, who ousted Cargill's Ned Echavez, 3 and 2.

Local top JR Tangkaro was the only big gun that was never pushed, winning 5 and 3 against Anthony Sabas before downing Ali Balbarge the down 7 and 6, in the afternoon.

Ruby Cabe Garris also made the quarterfinals after a 3-up victory over No. 3 seed John Riet Medecoza as seventeen-hole Medecoza also advanced opposite unheralded 49-er Eugino after a 3 and 2 victory over Jeenie Boy Galon.

Regina took out Wilnis Labajo, 3 and 2 after his 1-up conquest of Beau Monte in the morning.

Meanwhile, Ruby Yang, who entered the senior ranks just three years ago, became the first match play champion in the division by beating Cuby Concolcol, 2 and 1.

The morning's opening round also had its share of upsets, headlined by Ben Bilandon tumble and Jimmy Boy Galon outlasting local hot-and No. 12 seed Cheye Dulay, 1-up.

Asistio, looking leaner, defeated his cheap fernando in the morning, 2 and 1, before that him to Rumo, even as did her Justin Linjap, who qualified as the No. 3 seed, was taken out by discover Ali Sinbergs, 1-up, she in the morning.

Arya Tampiero, the defending ladies champion, and Carmelette Villanueva set up a semifinal clash also after posting contrasting wins.

Tampiero came roaring back from a romp to three holes down to take a 2 and 1 win over Marina Nico, while Villanueva was convincing in 4 and 2 victory over Lorelyn Cainguin.

Irma Galvan and Apple Padilla will clash in the other semifinal after downing Kristine Lorenzana Chanda Shuba via 1-up scores.

ALI TAGALAVA (right) of Coca-Cola tips in a rebound off Jay-R Reyes of Welcoat during their game last night. Story on 11F.

NSAs laud new PSC allowance scheme

By Marc Anthony Reyes

NATIONAL SPORTS ASSOCIATIONS ARE "happy" with the national athletes' new allowance scheme which, in effect, raised their monthly take by as much P10,000 each.

The athletes used to get P9,000 for Class A, P6,000 Class B and P4,000 Class C. They also get a daily meal allowance of P200.

Under the new scheme effective tomorrow, all athletes who have won a medal during the past two Southeast Asian Games will get P15,000 inclusive of food.

If the athletes don't use either Philsports Sports Commission facilities like Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, Philsports and Baguio Training Center, they each get an additional P5,000 per day.

Presidents of track and field and bowling associations, who are among the best performing athletes in the SEA Games said they favor the new system.

"I think it is a big push on the NSAs, but as far as bowling is concerned, we are happy with it," said Philippine Bowling Congress president Steve Hontiveros. "It's better for us because our athletes don't eat at BMIC anyway."

The bowling team members mostly train outside the BMIC and are not billeted inside the athletes' village, unlike many SEA athletes like those in track and field.

"This is long overdue, because compared to other countries in Southeast Asia like Singapore and Thailand, we are far behind," said Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association chief Go Teng Bok. "But overall, I'm very happy because it's for the athletes."

The moves, however, may have on the cost from about 1,000 to 6,000, according to PSC chair Ilarde Enrico.

But the reduction will have to be made by the NSAs who will endorse their new power based on the criteria set by the PSC.

Non-medalists will get P5,000 monthly incentive of allowance, while junior athletes won't get any allowances.

Real stories. Real solutions.
How Shell helps people go further.

Here are stories from winners of free fuel from Shell.

Mats Rivera is a 36 year-old Section Manager from Cavite. Winning 2,500 pesos worth of free fuel helped her extend the family's budget during school time.

"Instead of putting money in fuel, I'll use it for something else like bags and shoes for the kids."

- Ma. Theresa Rivera

Hard-working credit specialist Jerry Pasquito loaded up his father-in-law's multi-cab with the free fuels he won and treated his family to a much-deserved summer outing.

"When I won, I was so excited to be a first-time winner."

- Jerry Pasquito

With Shell's Free Fuel and House promo, you stand a chance to go even further.

SMYBC LEAGUE CHAMPS: Muntinlupa Rubber Corp. team members (from left) Lois Magsanoc, Pio Ong, Jocelyn Go, Robyn Ko, and Peping Chan cheer the trophy they won after topping the 6th Grand Mid Texas Bowling Club (SMYBC) Inter-Commercial League held at Sta. Lucia East Grand Mall. Stella Filip Construction placed second, while Stella Youth-Team 1 landed third. The other member of the champion team is Alice Ordoñez (not in photo).

SWIMMING ROW

Parents' group tells POC: Hold elections

THE SWIMMING GROUP calling for the ouster of Philippine Swimming Swimming Association president Mark Joseph is calling on the Philippine Olympic Committee to order new elections for the newly-titled national sports association.

The group claims Joseph has illegally been assuming his position since the past three years.

The POC is unlikely to heed the call, though, as it has already said that the Pasa should settle the issue amicably.

"It's better to wait for Mark Joseph as senior so they can settle that internally," said POC spokesman Joey Romasanta.

But the group claims Romasanta had also said that all Joseph needs to do is resolve the issue and make a report to the POC.

Sisters Jane and Susie Ong, the designated spokespersons of the group, however said that the POC can order the elections because it was the one that installed Joseph in the post.

"We parents, coaches and club owners are urging the POC to immediately carry out the [election]," Jane Ong said during yesterday's BOSOP in Emerging weekly session, reiterating the group's stand that a) good elections be held and another election for president, pursuant to the agreement reached when Joseph was named head of Pasa.

Joseph has said he will answer the charges brought by the group—composed of swimmers, their parents and club heads...once he returns from an official trip abroad.

Among the charges brought forward were mishandling of funds collected from swimmers, coaches and swimming clubs who want to register with the Pasa. The group said Joseph has yet to show a financial statement that will outline how and where the collected fees have been spent.

HURRY!
The last two draws will be on June 11 and June 25, 2008

GO FURTHER WITH YOUR FREE FUEL!

4th Draw Winners of Shell's "Win Free Fuel and a House" Raffle Promo

METRO MANILA

Allan Christian de Luna
Arnel Bandoc
Arnold Cadiente
Catalino Pision
Celso Mallisa
Cheryl Pascual
Christopher Demetrius Manzala
Clarito Parra
Demetrio Tumolisan
Eddie Salino
Edgardo Linjaco
Frederick Tru
Germiniano Solis Jr.
Glenda Pastor
Helen de Jesus
Henry See Dee
Joaquino Bunagan
Jose Lowell Cortez
Lagayo Osea
Luisito Herino
Manolo Pagara
Marcial Francisco
Marlou Rancoe
Michael Obera
Nelson Malago
Norberto Sauco Jr
Ronnie Conrado
Rescon Dagu-ob
Reynaldo Bardaje
Rizaldo Majarl
Roberto Franco
Rolando Compacion
Rovie Ocampo
Rudy Segundo
Teresa Santor

NORTH LUZON

Alma Gaalut
Anthony Garcia
Bella Fabre
Benedicto Cristobal
Chernee Dayag
Catalino Lim
Deka Bustero
Domingo de Vera
Dan Melchor
Edward Gallat
Elpidio Reyes
Eric Abaang
Ferdinand Gonzales
Francis Tolosa
Fritzie Torres
Froilan Dayrit
Geraldine Trivino
Gian Franco Castillo
Guillermo Cruz
Johnny Saviliano
Juliet Rivera
Larry dela Cruz
Leoncio Abad
Ma. Corazon Osano
Ma. Visitacion Baggayan
Margarita Brin Jr
Marianne Manalaksa
Maximo Carrera Jr.
Nenita Padua
Noe Alston Lim Jr
Rayson Decano
Reynaldo Nicolio
Reynaldo Tan
Richelle Vito Cruz
Rocky Rivera
Rowena Custodio
Samuel Aguilera
Tessie Mariano
Virginia Patrangan
Zenaida Sanchez

SOUTH LUZON

Allan Ilagan
Anna Bulaon
Buenafe Belmonte
Carina Cortes
Compan Armeda
Danilo Pascua
David Acacio
Emma Camejo
Erlinda Mansanang
Erwin Tinoc
Gerly Ruth Abordo
Gerry Ramos
Gilbert Fiaic
Gino Castillo
Hector Makiawan
Indira Widiawan
Jesus Camacho Jr
Juvito Mendoza
Karen Valencia
Lyndon Candog
Ma. Emelyn Mendoza
Manuel Ilagan
Mon Enriquez
Nancy Arlasa
Richard Dianco
Rio dela Cruz
Roberto Albotra
Rolando Curambao
Virgilio Grandio
Virgilio Borje Jr.

VISAYAS

Aguinaldo Quinquito
Arlyn Iray
Carlito Escuadro
Cecilia Evangelio
Chantal Marie Bonelo
Constancio Austero
Dante Poliquing
Elma Lopez
Fe Antoinet Olib
Ismael Salcedo Jr.
Jaminal Fernando
Jason Dy
Jilmer Quilapio
Jimmy Revel
Josiemar Maga
Lorna Lim
Lucia Tolosa
Lumilin Silan
Marcos Uybinas
Margie Siangco
Maria Ana Jamelo
Marivic Inolino
Marlon Zabala
Merry Diokno
Michael Chan
Randy Domingo
Raquel Serenio
Reynaldo Jumamil
Roger Magbasang
Silverio Navarro

MINDANAO

Agapito Rosario
Arlen Villanueva
Catalino Bonajon
Charmagne Pernites
Cheryl Chiboy
Christopher Tan
Daniel Saraco
Deonilyn Alloy
Douglas Mesquita Sr
Elpidio Saulagio Requinto
Elsena Calloza
Elmer Tudio
Felisenia Patosa
Jessa Canalbas Fabiania
Joel Guinea Jr
Jonas Lumasag
Jovencio Dangcalan
Jovy Salazar
Ken Solan
Leonardo Lazar
Magdalena Martinez
Marielyn Gallego
Maria Lina Capada
Nilo Abecia
Nila Salas
Noel Bucayan
Randy Yu
Rene Generoso
Ricardo Yañez
Sheila Serolia

Formal notification will be sent via registered mail to the winners by June 1, 2008.

makeitmove

Batang Pier gear up for Jones Cup

HARBOUR Centre will go into the Willian Jones Cup with grounded expectations, certainly none that will have them picturing championship celebrations such as its recent PBL victory. EDDA RANDOLF

By Jasmine M. Payo

FIVE-TIME PBL CHAMPION Harbour Centre will now represent the Philippines in the 20th William Jones Cup in Taiwan this July—only this time, the goals will be set much lower.

"We'll just gauge the Asian competition," said team owner Mikee Romero hours after his Batang Pier captured its fifth straight title, crown by edging Hapee, 3-1, in the Finals last Wednesday.

"It will be our first time to compete in the Asian level. So we're not really expecting a strong finish, unless the PBA loads us some players."

The Batang Pier accepted the FAP-Eusebuang Basketball ng Pilipinas' offer to represent the country in the club meet after the PBA turned down the assignment last April. National coach Ariel Recall will call the shots.

But Romero said he will request for three to four available pro aggies to beef up the roster that will go up against teams from Japan, South Korea, Qatar and Jordan, among others.

Last December, Harbour Centre spearheaded the formation of the all-amateur Philippine team—powered by Ilonggo Hec's dare-sister Mon Tolentino Thayne Jason Castro and Hapee Fil-Am Gabe Norwood—that captured the 2007 Southeast Asian Games gold in Thailand.

Four months later, the Batang Pier settled for a runner-up finish to Indonesia in the inaugural Southeast Asian Basketball Association Champions Cup in Jakarta.

ADAMSON University's Melissa Bautista dupes a left that defies the defense of Ateneo in yesterday's championship match.

Boxer . . .

From page A19

third gold in the 5000m race late yesterday.

Par Eastern sprinter Kenneth Herrin also sparkled by clocking SF Team mainstay Arnold Villacorta for the century dash crown.

A virtual nobody when he was recruited by PBLI after the 2005 Palaro in Iloilo, the hard-working 20-year-old from Ilocos and La Union docked 10.67 seconds to beat Villacorta (11.08) and Edech Anthony Bentillos (11.17).

On PSC standout outing action for Iloilo, Marco Jimenado took the women's sprint crown in 12.33 seconds over Agnes Garcesos of Bulacan (12.63) and Gizelle Olaso-on (12.66).

Reenalo Iduandes clocked 11.11 seconds for the juniors' 100m title to underline Hil's dominance of the sprint events. He won by the distance of margins over reigning Palaro champ Lindley Fran Arenjo of Cebu in another scorching upset.

Korea rules Sirikit Cup; RP sixth

CHEONG JEEA AND CHA RO-driguez closed out with identical one-under 71s but the Philippines did further back in sixth at the close of the 34th Queen Sirikit Cup ruled by Korea for the second straight year in Japan yesterday.

Ranla, the reigning RP Ladies Open champion, birdied the last three holes for a 35 while Rodriguez, coming off a victory in the recent Subah Amateur Open, birdied Nos. 16 and 17 for those 71s that gave RP a closing 2-under 214 at the Sodegaura Country Club in Chiba.

But that failed to lift the ICTSI-backed RP golfers from a previous fifth place ranking as they wound up with a 430, two behind New Zealand.

Han Jung-eun shot a 66 while Yang Soo-jin added a 75 as Korea came from behind to frustrate host Japan and capture the championship via a three-stroke sweep with a 423 after a 139.

NCA World derby tilt ends today

AFTER TOUGH OPENING ROUNDS, THE National Cockers Association (NCA) World Championship shifts to high gear when the best of the best battle it out in the final day of competitions at the Ynares Center.

After the first four rounds, Ricky Valencia (Scorpio), Arman Santos (Jade Resort) and Benjo Lily (Thrifty 28) have remained undefeated with four points, to lead the heated chase for the championship.

Hot on their tails is George Fajardo (After Anniversary Jump 06-28), owned by George Fajardo who has 3.5 points.

Meanwhile, Nonito Buenavista (ESJ), Philip Divinagbao and Edmond Yasay (Commerce Warriors), Manolo Lopez, Raul Adan and Tony Salazar (Foxy), Eric Bella Rosa (Pasay Anniversary July 1-6-19-13), Boy Ilo Ynares (Barangaroo), Dec. Rolando Flores (Wild Wing) Sandoval (MVP and 4M Sandoval, Roberto Santos (FT Gamit), Rudy Abueva and Jimmy Ang (Mabuhay Jonalyn Jubbi, Jun Gonzaga (Frosty 14), Arnold Mendoza (East Coast 6), Edwin Magdaraog (Pyke Sandoval), and Libertado Villar (Riverside), all won three points each.

Several entries with two points each also have a shot at the championship, which makes the Speaker's Cup donated by Speaker Prospero Nograles a

Government Warning
is dangerous

Ateneo's Pramusk Siri-On (left), Maria Rosario Soriano (center) and Karla

SHAKEY'S V-LEAGUE

Lady Falcons soar, clip Lady Eagles, bag crown

Bautista nails Most Valuable Player trophy

By Cedrill P. Tapay, Contributor

HER TEAM TRAILED AHEAD IN THE THIRD SET, ADAMSON'S MIRZA BAUTISTA powered on another weak dumaw service return.

The smash put the Lady Falcons within reaching distance of the title at 23-24, and it packed so much oomph, it typified what had been a dominant display for the Lady Falcons throughout the Shakey's V-League Season 3 first conference.

The Lady Falcons, hardly showing the emotional baggage of losing two successive championship matches to two other tournaments, clinched their maiden V-League title over the Lady Eagles with a swift and merciless 25-17, 25-13, 25-17 victory yesterday that completed a sweep of the best-of-three series before another big crowd at The Arena in San Juan.

"The most and valuable player is there," said Adamson coach Milaeva Dulce Pano. "I never doubted this team, even after our two championship losses. They deserve this title".

Adjudged Most Valuable Player moments before the game, the 22-year-old Bautista, once a seldom-used guest player for University of Santo Tomas, proved her worth with 17 points, all on attacks.

"Her (Bautista's) potential was always there and is finally came out in this tournament," Pano said.

The Lady Falcons actually trailed, 2-1, in the first set, before Bautista went to work, ranking kill after kill that pushed Adamson ahead, 11-10, a lead that was never relinquished.

Scoring heavily on Michele Sagudino's serve, the Lady Falcons jumped to a 7-1 lead early in the second set and coasted trouble-free to the clincher.

"I'm still happy our team (Ateneo) fought hard despite Adamson's advantage in skill and experience," Ateneo coach Michelle Laborte said. "I'm sure my players learned a lot from this tournament".

Sisifret, San Sebastian, leaning on Thai import and hear attacker Sudee Amornet, captured third place with their own version of a sweep of Lycoum, 25-18, 25-14, 25-17.

BAUTISTA. Best of the bes

Ateneo battles Letran for FCBL title

ATENEO AND LETRAN ARRANGED A championship showdown after beating their respective foes in the semifinals of the Mighty Sports Filipino-Chinese Basketball League (FCBL) Prengo Junior Cup last Tuesday at the Philippine Buddhaharan Academy gym.

The blue Eaglets and the Squires banked on strong second half performances to subjugate the foes and secure the knockout finals.

The top seed Ateneo outscored the San Beda's University Baby Stars in the final stanza, 20-18, to break away from a tight game and secured the first finals slot, 89-73.

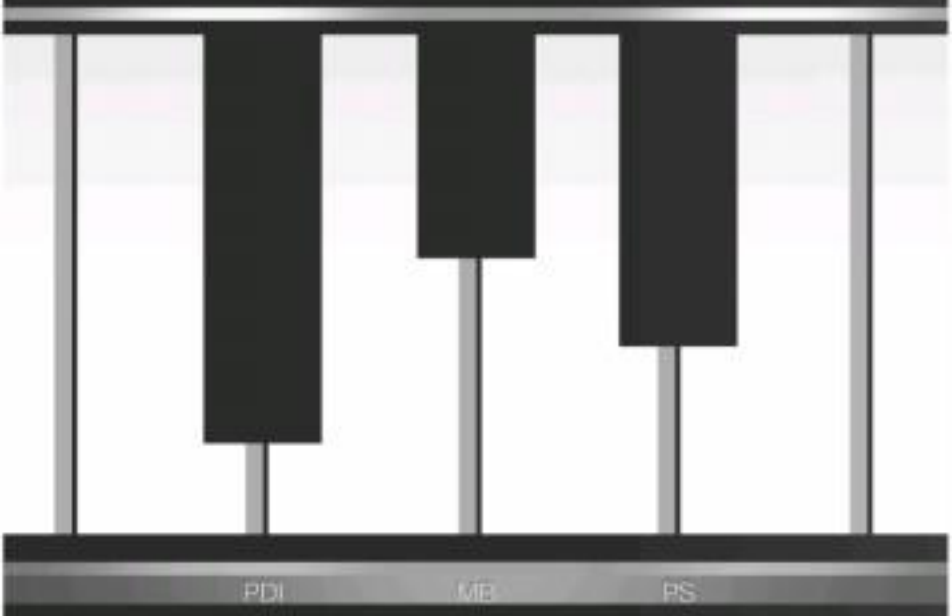
Kevin Mas scattered 21 points to lead the Squires to a shaky 120-99 victory over the pesky Jose Rizal University Light Bombers to clinch the second finals spot.

In consolation matches, University of Santo Tomas mulliped Philippine Cultural High School (PCHS), 78-68, while San Beda beat Xavier, 71-62.

Xavier and PCHS will meet for seventh and eighth positions while San Beda and UST collide for fifth and sixth spots today at the Philippine Buddhaharan Academy gym. JILT and FEU-RIZ it up for 3rd and 4th spots in the tournament also supported by Holiday Underwear, Mighty Pilot King, Fg, First Team Sports Mktg., Optima Inc., Cimcher Packaging Tape and Dumbo Construction Supply.

g: Cigarette smoking
to your health

A Grand Performance



Synovate Media Atlas, one of the country's top research agencies, reveals that we are the most read newspaper. Results show that we have raised the bar of readership-by close to 90,000 copies over our nearest competitor nationwide. It is music to our ears hearing that we are still No. 1. But we reserve the applause for you-our readers, advertisers and partners.

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
here to ask. be to inquirer.

SOURCE: Synovate Nationwide Urban Media Atlas Survey, January to December 2007

Ginn golf: Two share lead, retiring Annika falters

MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA—Kristie Mewis and Kim Ha-kyoung both shot 4Ms Thursday to share the first-round lead at the Linn Tribune, while Annika Sorenstam struggled and was seven shots behind in the tournament where she is the host.

Sophie Gustafson was third at 66. US Open winner Cristie Kerr led a group of seven another stroke back at 67.

Sorenstam, ranked second in the world, has looked forward to playing straight at the tournament she's hosted the past two years. Pairing shares, programs, caps and t-shirts all hour her first name, "ANNIKA," in capital letters.

The event has world No. 1 Lorena Ochoa earlier this week when she left to be with her sick uncle in Mexico, leaving Sorenstam as the marquee attraction.

Sorenstam was injured a year ago, and last appearance in the event in 2007 was her first one after nearly six months away from the tour in heal. She finished tied for 36th and vowed to do better for fans and sponsors.

A year later, Sorenstam has arrived with three tour victories, her cold-induced precision and a sense of urgency after announcing earlier in May she'd step away from competitive golf after this season.

"Yet again, Sorenstam couldn't get much going at the River Bowne Country Club. She opened with a bogey and had a disastrous eight bogey 7 on the fifth.

"I need some low scores the next few days," Sorenstam said.

Instead it was Wi06 who was the Hall of Famer on fire in the opening round. She had five birdies and an eagle for her 7-under 65.

"I'm been swinging it quite calmly for the majority of the year, and just not getting the most out of it," Wi06 said.

Wi06 rolled to an uphill, 15-foot birdie putt on the 10th hole to tie for the lead. She moved in front a hole later, chipping to 4 feet on the par-5 11th for another birdie.

Wi06 hasn't seen on the LPGA Tour since 2006, although she has captured three tournaments in her homeland of Australia since. Wi06 hopes to regain that championship touch on the LPGA Tour.

"I'd like to give myself more chances of winning than I am, and then hopefully start getting on that track where I'm pulling off those wins," she said.

Kim, a second-year pro from South Korea, had four birdies in five holes to move into contention. She tied Wi06 with a birdie on the par-5 16th hole—Kim's eighth birdie of the round—after posting her only bogey to 10 her.

"I had a lot of opportunities and I think I made the most of them," she said.

Sorenstam wanted a lower score. Still, she was proud she steadied herself with two birdies on her final eight holes. AP

RP chessers still pulling away vs Myanmar

TAGAYTAY CITY—IM CANDIDATE MASTER Rolando Wella, fourteen national juniors champion Oliver Barbosa and Reggie Ong provided the decisive votes for the Philippines as they beat their Myanmar counterparts, 4.5-1.5, to finally their hold on the lead after the eighth round of the "RP-Myanmar Dual Match" three championship at the Lake Garden Hotel here Friday.

The Filipinos now have a commanding 11.5-4.5 lead over their rivals in the 12-round tournament. They have yet to lose a match against their higher-rated Burmese counterparts.

Wella outclassed FIDE Expert Lin Naing in only 25 moves of the Sicilian Najdorf. Barbosa crushed FM Kyaw Zin Kyaw in 41 moves of another Sicilian and Ong of Davao City stunned IM Zaw Htun Wynn in 38 moves of the fourteen opening.

Three other Filipinos—Jayson Gonzales, Rolando Andador and Eric Sullivan—drew their matches to end the win.

Gonzales halved the point with fellow IM Min Lay Linn in 39 moves of the London system, Andador split the point with IM Aung Naing in 19 moves of the Philidor and Sullivan drawed the point with IM Oo Kyaw Nay in 11 moves of the Sicilian Dragon.

National Chess Federation of the Philippines executive/veteran director Willie Makes said he expects the Filipinos to "breeze through the remaining four rounds to wrap up the title."

Wella remains the leading Filipino scorer after eight rounds with six wins and two draws for seven points.

MARIA Sharapova crumbs up a return to Barbanie Mattek. AP

FRENCH OPEN

Serena ousted; Sharapova, Ivanovic gain

PARIS—FOR SERENA WILLIAMS, RECENT chances came in a flurry Friday at the French Open.

She shouted overdrawals, hit wild volleys and squandered seven break points. The net result: a stunning third-round loss to Razzano Svobonik, 6-4, 6-4.

The hurry-exit matches Williams' earliest in nine visits to Roland Garros and guarantees a first-time women's champion. Williams, who won the French Open in 2002, was the lone former champion to enter the draw.

"I missed a lot of easy shots and a lot of key points than I felt like would have turned the match around," a subdued Williams said shortly after the loss.

Williams also lost in the third round in 1999.

The 27-year-old Svobonik ranked the biggest victory of her career. She has only one wins over a player ranked higher than the his 3-ranked Williams, beating No. 4 Amelie Mauresmo at Zurich in 2005.

No. 1 seeded Maria Sharapova and No. 2 Ana Ivanovic advanced in the completion of a second-round match halted in the second set Thursday because of darkness. Sharapova beat American Bethanie Mattek, 6-2, 3-6, 6-2, a rematch against the fourth-round by beating 17-year-old Caroline Wozniacki, 6-4, 6-1.

Williams, who played the day's first match on Court Suzanne Lenglen, recovered only one of eight break-point chances and won 6-4 in the second set. She repeatedly set up points until her lashed in finish them, losing 14 of 21 points at the net.

"There are a lot of things I would try to do different, but you can't rewind time," Williams said.

Her mother and coach, Oracene Price, said Williams has "been in a funk. It's on like her She wasn't herself."

At the final game of the first set, Williams thumped an easy overhead into the net. Four points later, she yanked her way forward but blew a volley, then here over in dismay and pressed her forehead against the tip of her racket handle.

Another hurried overhead sent her to the sixth game of the second set, helping Svobonik to a 4-2 lead, 5-3.

"I wasn't nervous," Williams said. "She was getting a ton of balk back, and I might have let that get into my head. She was just making some shots I don't think she's ever made before, or she probably would be in the top two."

When Williams fell behind she turned up the volume, grunting with almost every shot and screaming in celebration when she hit a winner. But she was unable to rally and the No. 27-seeded Svobonik kept her cool down the stretch. AP

Lipa scores nat'l softball opener double

HOST LIPA CITY'S MEN'S AND WOMEN'S squads came up with contrasting victories in the opening day yesterday of the National Open Softball Championships at the Ibay Stoney Field in Barangay Bolay-Bolay in Lipa City.

The Adamson University-powered Lipa softballers needed only three innings in an abbreviated 10-1 mauling victim of the visiting Silver Dragons of Indonesia.

Their men's counterparts, however, needed a two-hit, two-run salvo in the bottom half of the ninth to eke out a 23-12 decision over Lampung, also of Indonesia, and observing an open.

With the Lipeñan holding the Indonesian batters to just three hits and their blows pelting the visitors' starters with three, including a pair of home runs in the bottom half of the first inning, the hosts had the game wrapped up right there.

Coach Ann Santiago's Lipeñas completed the massacre with a unanimous 13-run attack in the next frame before easing up the pressure on their rivals in the nine period, where they stroked the Indonesians' lone run-an equal of consecutive.

"Medyo nahirapan kayo (maybe coday to nervin (We had a good start and we sustained it)," Santiago who entered the Philippine Sea Girls to the Southeast Asian Games gold last year to Thailand, said after her team's victory.

The surprisingly strong Indonesian male chauvin battled their hosts on equal terms in the first six innings even grabbing the upperhand at the top of the penultimate frame with a five-run streak, 12-11.

The Lipeñas finally gave the local crowd something to cheer about by finishing off the ambitious foes in their side of the inning.

With one out and no one on base, right-fielder Clut Mercado led off that decisive stob with a single to left-center in what represented the possible tying run.

Reigning Ramiro then took first on baseon-balls, in the process pushing Mercado to the scoring position in second.

Isidro Abello then secured a double to left that sent Mercado and Ramiro home.

DLSU, St. Benilde ladies reach Nike hoops quarters

By Rovina S. Austria

SISTER SCHOOLS DE LA Salle and College of St. Benilde took different routes in clinching the remaining quarterfinal berths of the Nike Summer League women's division on Thursday at the FEU gym in Manila.

Angeli Gloriani scored 19 points to lead La Salle past Philippine Maritime Institute, 66-60, as the Lady Archers secured the fourth and final quarterfinal berth in Group B.

St. Benilde won by default over Polytechnic University of the Philippines to make the Group A quarterfinals.

In Juniors action, Lemuy Ivanez on the 23 points of Kevin Ajoc to oust Benedictine International School, 111-100, in double overtime.

The Spikers duels with UMAP champion La Salle-Zobel in the next round.

Only five players from Letran and Benedictine and their respective coaches finished the match after a bench-clearing incident resulted in the several ejections.

Dreamweaver Ann Bedu and unbeatable Jessa Ickard frustration fight for the best junior quarterfinal seat at 3 p.m. today.

In seniors games today Adamson bests Ateneo, Stefanie Li tackles Feati and San Beda and Lyceum collide for the Group B top seed.

The women's quarterfinal round begins on Monday with Adamson (3-0) taking on Ateneo (3-4), the Eastern University (3-0) tackling La Salle (6-2), University of Santo Tomas (6-1) going up against St. Benilde (5-2), and University of the Philippines (7-2) battling Philippine College of Criminology (7-1).

Schedules, results and statistics are available at website www.nike.com.ph.

GAWAD Ralleys founder Tony Meloto (second from left) visits the PBA office to thank PBA commissioner Sonny Barrios (second from left) for the two hours the league donated to the foundation last month during the All-Star Weekend in Baguio City. Also in photo are PBA chair Tony Chua (third from left) and Watson alternate governor Carlo Quevedo (extreme right).

Alaska kids gain finals

RAMOS, TONGCO EXPLODED for 37 points in the first quarter while Enin Laure had 28 for the game as Barangay Alaska-Coloscan rolled in a 113-62 victory over hosting Coca-Cola-Bagong Pagasa-day to the semifinals of the Burlington-Hutang PBA Summer League at the Ynares Center.

Tongco put the game beyond doubt, leading the Barang Ayes to a 38-13 lead after the first quarter, where he scored all but two of the team's total points.

Barang Alaska-Coloscan will go for the championship against other Barang. Gindara-Antipolo or Barang Talk 'N' Text-Quezon City, who dispute the last finals spot tomorrow at the Big Dome.

Barangay	1	2	3	4	Total
ALASKA-COLOSCAN	38	25	25	25	113
COCA-COLA-BAGONG PAGASA	13	12	16	21	62

ALASKA-COLOSCAN—Laure 28, Mabanta 14, Bondoc 9, Reilly 8, Davis 5, Villanueva 4, Ong 4, Gallego 2, Lopez 2, Abad 2, Santos 2, Wong 2, Santos 2, Olivares 0.

COCA-COLA-BAGONG PAGASA—Lumagui 16, Ignacio 10, Santos 10, Bonleon 5, Lucas 5, Labuhan 2, Salvador 5, Dalisay 3, Lanuzo, Nakano 0, Ramos 0, Nonan 0, Bonleon 0, Lumagui.

Quarters: 37-13, 66-25, 89-38, 113-62

McDonald, Samson top PTCC kickoff

TUBADE RACING TEAM HAMsaved out an impressive start behind British Stuart McDonald and new era Gil Dizon Jr. Samson recently in the kickoff of the 2008 Philippine Touring Car Championship at the Subic International Raceway.

McDonald and Samar-underdog TRS stewards despite the team spending barely a year in the touring car scene.

McDonald, a product of TRS Circuit Rally class, quickly grabbed the lead and controlled his pace from thereon to pull a big upset over defending champion Alvin Santos for the Group 3 overall crown.

Samson was equally impressive as a rookie driver, as he clinched in fourth overall in the Group 2 race and turned back Raoul Mudrings for the Group 3 Class C title.

It was one tough win for McDonald, who had to endure the right encounter with Santos that resulted to collisions and spin-outs.

But Race 2 turned out quite disappointing. The two were lobbying for the lead as the third race when Santos lost traction to Dizon's side door and sent the latter to the tire barrier.

"I'm very happy with the win, however it could have been a sweep if not for the incident," said McDonald, who actually bagged his second runaway car win this season after rallying the Isuzu Vehicle Group.

For details, call 8177505 or visit www.ptccracing.com.

THE CHECKERED flagged is waved as Stuart McDonald, proving that he has a great future with the Taiwan Racing Team), powers his team to a strong finish during the Philippine Touring Car Championship recently in Subic.

SPORTS

Lakers fight back to oust Spurs, claim West crown

LOS ANGELES—THE LOS ANGELES LAKERS crossed an NBA finals hoodoo the first time in five years by executing a dramatic fight back to beat the San Antonio Spurs, 100-92, in Game Five on Thursday.

Kobe Bryant orchestrated the recovery with a towering display as the Lakers came from 17 points behind early in the second half to clinch the Western Conference finals, 4-1.

The All-Star guard, the NBA's Most Valuable Player, top-scored with 30 points as Los Angeles won their eighth consecutive home playoff game this postseason.

Bryant also registered three rebounds and three assists while forward Lamar Odom contributed 15 points and Spanish center Pau Gasol 12, along with a career playoff-high 19 rebounds.

Spurs guard Tony Parker led the way with 23 points for the defending champions who have clinched four NBA titles in the last nine years.

"This is a dream come true, a dream come true," an elated Bryant said in a television interview after the Lakers were presented with the Western Conference trophy.

"It is such a blessing to share this with a group of guys, who are like brothers. It's such an unbelievable feeling. It's the answer to a prayer.

"We knew we could play better and the first half was tough for us. They caught us off guard but we cut the deficit to a manageable game by halftime. Then we came out in the second half and put our foot on the gas.

"And we ain't done yet," Bryant added, referring to the NBA championship finals where the Lakers will meet either the Boston Celtics or the Detroit Pistons.

"We play for one thing and one thing only, and that is championships."

The Lakers made a surprisingly lackluster start as the Spurs embarked the first quarter, Michael Finley pouring in easy three-pointers to put the defending champions 26-15 ahead.

San Antonio stretched its lead to 17 points early in the second period before reserve Jordan Farmar sparked a brief Lakers rally with a 6-0 solo burst.

A relaxing drive to the basket for a lay-up cut the deficit to 53-22 and the capacity crowd at the Staples Center cheered into distinct moments earlier, erupted in a cacophony of noise.

The inspirational tirpoint, with loud chants of "MVP, MVP" ringing in his ears, shot four out of six from the floor before the Lakers closed the first half just 48-43 behind.

Urged on by an energized crowd including Hollywood actors Jack Nicholson, Dennis Washington, Antonio Banderas, Adam Sandler and Cameron Diaz, the home team raised the tempo after the break.

A Bryant two-point jumper put the Lakers ahead 61-59 late in the third quarter before he set up a stunning three-pointer by Vladimir Radmanovic on the buzzer for a 64-63 lead.

Bryant dominated the final period by scoring 17 of his 30 points there.

"He was unbelievable again," Spurs forward Manu Ginobili said of Bryant. "When his shots couldn't seem to just look over and made some crazy shots. He's the best player in the league."

Reuters

THE LOS Angeles Lakers savor that winning feeling again. Lakers players hoist the Western Conference championship trophy up high after vanquishing erstwhile defending NBA champions San Antonio Spurs, 4-1, with a come-from-behind (100-92) victory at the Staples Center. The Lakers will face the winners of the Boston Celtics-Detroit Pistons-Eastern finals in the NBA championship. The Celtics lead that series, 3-2. +

A year after trade demand, Kobe leads LA's finals trip

LOS ANGELES—A YEAR AFTER ROCKING the Los Angeles Lakers with disgruntled talk of wanting to be traded, Kobe Bryant led his team into the NBA championship finals with an inspirational display on Thursday.

The All-Star guard, named the NBA's Most Valuable Player for the first time earlier this month, top-scored with 39 points as the Lakers beat defending champions the San Antonio Spurs 100-92 in Game Five to clinch the series 4-1.

Bryant, who shook Los Angeles last May by telling a radio station he wanted to be traded before changing his mind hours later, has been reluctant in the past for his selfish approach to the game.

Whether or not those comments have been overcome, he has become the perfect team player for the Lakers this season.

"Kobe deserves all of the things he's received this year," Spurs forward Bruce Bowen told reporters after snatching Bryant through the Western Conference finals.

"Guys like that, when they have other guys around them, it helps them into a great deal," Bowen added. "And he has a great group around him, (the Gasol) and Lamar (Odom)."

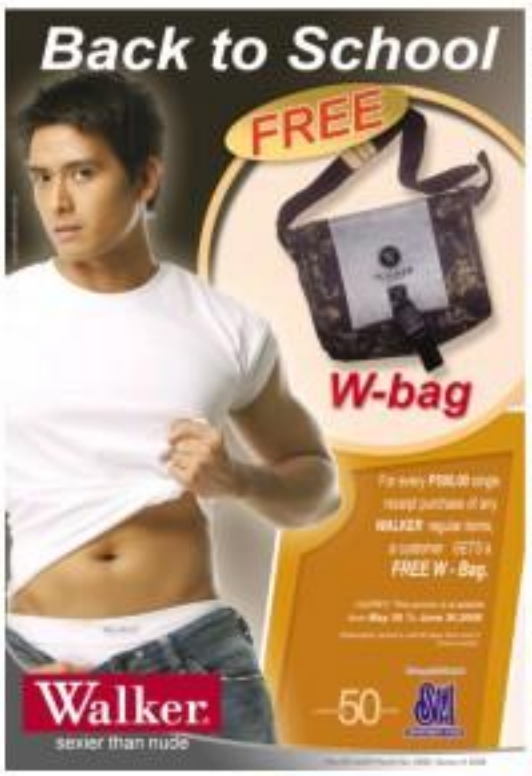
The Lakers thrashed their heels in the finals a year to the day after Bryant called the team's home office "a mess" during a radio interview. A day later, he demanded a trade, adamantly saying he preferred playing on Nets rather than returning to the team he joined as an 18-year-old in 1996.

The situation calmed down until Lakers owner Jerry Buss told reporters during training camp in October he was listening to offers for Bryant, angering the superstar once again.

But Bryant has been rejuvenated in his commitment to the cause and the Lakers are back in the finals.

Reuters, AP

KOBE Bryant—who as one point angrily demanded the ire he traded by the Lakers, now to Phila.—finally leads his "brothers" to the NBA Finals.



BUSINESS

Editor Raul G. Marcelo • Assistant Editor Corrie S. Mariano

Inflation seen at 9-year high in May

BSP says average price increase at 8.8-9.6%

By Doris C. Dumlao

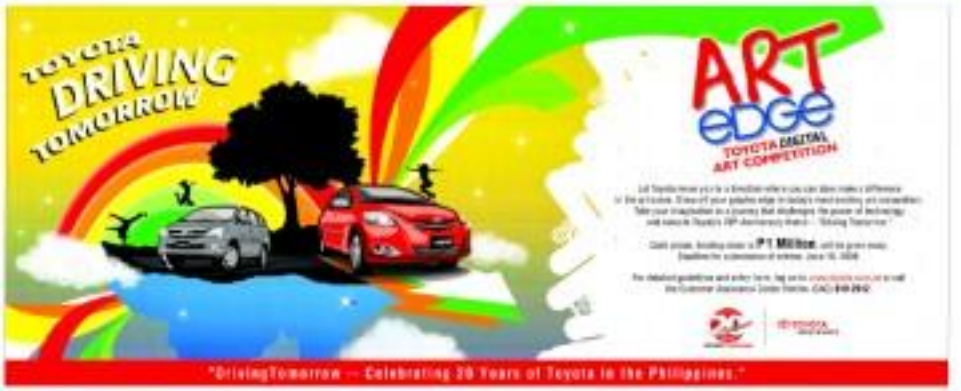
CONSUMER PRICES WERE ESTIMATED TO HAVE risen at the fastest pace in nine years this May due mainly to higher fuel prices and transport fares as well as the peso depreciation against the dollar, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the country's central bank now likely sees inflation rate for May accelerating further to 8.8-9.6 percent in May from the three-year high of 8.3 percent posted in April.

Tetangco vowed that the inflation-targeting central bank would act promptly to prevent inflation pressures from getting out of hand.

Yesterday, the BSP also reported that growth in domestic liquidity—a key indicator monitored by the central bank—rose to 9.6 percent in March year-on-year from 6.6 percent in February.

INFLATION to



Shang Properties unit buys prime Bonifacio lot

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

SHANG GLOBAL CITY PROPERTIES Inc., a subsidiary of listed firm Shang Properties Inc., said it has completed the purchase of a 11,126-square meter land at 9th Bonifacio Global City to expand business district in Taguig City.

Shang Properties is the property development arm of the Sy-led Shangri-La group, one of Asia's biggest conglomerates.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange yesterday, Shang Properties, formerly Edsa Properties Holdings Inc., said its subsidiary bought the property located at the "Shaw Paper Block" of Global City from Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. (FBDC).

FBDC is the partnership between the Ayala Campus property joint venture and the Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA), which spearheads the master planning of the Bonifacio Global City.

Shang Properties corporate secretary Federico Noel Jr. said details of the Fort Bonifacio project were still under study. Noel only hinted that the project would be a mixed-use development and that final details would be available by end-June.

The white-lager block is at the northwest of Ayala Land's residential and shopping strip dubbed Bonifacio High Street that faces 5th Avenue. It is also beside the Adidas sports camp.

Last April, Shang Properties signed a P1.5-billion loan agreement with Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. and Bank of the Philippine Islands to partially fund key development projects in Metro Manila. These projects form part of a three-year investment program estimated at P11 billion.

Among the company's new projects are the expansion of the Shangri-La Plaza Mall in the Ortigas complex, the second section of residential condominium towers on top of the mall, and an upscale mixed-hotel and residential condominium at the Fort Bonifacio Global City.

In an earlier statement, BCDA disclosed the West Negro Block as the site where a new Philippine Stock Exchange building, a six-star Shangri-La hotel and high-end residential condominiums of Shangri-La and Ayala Land will rise.

Shang Properties has four major subsidiaries. Shangri-La Plaza Corp. (79.72-percent owned); Edsa Beverage Services Inc. (wholly owned); Shang Grand Towers Corp. (wholly owned); and EPIC Logistics Holdings Inc. (68 percent-owned).

Shangri-La Plaza owns, leases and operates the Shangri-La Plaza Shopping Complex in Mandaluyong City that houses two department stores (Shangri-La and Crossroads), cinemas, restaurants, fast-food outlets, boutiques and specialty stores.

Edsa Beverage provides events and operates car park facilities surrounding the Shangri-La Plaza Shopping Complex.

Shang Grand Towers is a realty development company that constructed The Shang Grand Tower, a high-rise luxury condominium in the Makati commercial business district. It is also the owner and developer of The St. Francis @ Shangri-La Place, a mix-used, high-rise residential condominium located in Ortigas.

ISM seeks 100% stake in ETPI

CONFIDENT THAT IT CAN TURN EASTERN Telecommunications Philippines Inc. (ETPI) into a premier provider in the enterprise market, listed ISM Communications Corp. said that it wanted to increase its stake in the country's oldest telecom company to 100 percent.

Since 2006, ISM has bought 77.7 percent of ETPI. The rest is being fought over by the government and private parties.

"We hope that this will be resolved soon, at which point we hope to acquire the remaining shares," ISM president Eric Reyes said during the company's stockholders' meeting in Makati City.

"Within the next year we hope we can report that we have a 100-percent share in Eastern," said former trade minister Roberto Ongpin, currently chair of ISM's board of directors.

But more ETPI shares or not, ISM is considering investing to one or more other companies in the information and communications infrastructure to bolster its position in the market.

"We have P1 billion in cash, so we have a war chest, and we are looking at one or two things that may or may not pan out but we are certain you that we are on the path to growth," Ongpin added.

ISM has allocated $20 million in capital expenditure (capex) for 2008. Of the total, $12 million is currently funding the construction of a next-generation, high-capacity Internet backbone to support ISM's broadband service.

Stocks end higher on bargain-hunting

BENCHMARK PRICES CLOSED 0.9-percent higher yesterday on bargain-hunting and a pullback in oil prices, dealers said.

They said investors took comfort in positive offshore leads amid the upward revision of first quarter economic growth in the United States, a key market for Philippine exports.

The composite index rose 55.23 points to 2,827.44 off a high of 2,835.49.

The all-share index was up 0.6 percent at 1,761.79.

There were 55 advancers and 49 decliners, while 58 issues were flat.

Turnover was lower at P1.6 billion compared to P2.2 billion on Thursday.

Dealers said investors snapped up bargains after prices hit three-week lows, although they were also cautious to buy aggressively a day after the government announced disappointing economic growth figures for the first quarter.

"Clearly higher food and energy prices are taking a larger toll on consumers and businesses than we thought," said DBS Bank economist Lim Su Wen.

Data released on Thursday showed Philippine economic growth slowing to 5.1 percent in the first quarter, from 6.4 percent in the previous quarter.

Recovering from Thursday's recent falls, index leader Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. rose 1 percent to P2,460.

Manila Electric Co. rose 4.2 percent to P61.50. The stock recovered from recent heavy losses amid an ongoing battle for management control of the country's biggest power distributor.

Tan Miguel's '97 shares, listed in Philippine, lost 6 percent to P10.10. Its "B" shares, open to all investors, slumped 9.4 percent to P46.50. AFP

ENGLISH MARKET ENTRY

Japan BPO company picks RP

By Riza T. Olchondra

TRANSCOSMOS INC. (TCI), THE biggest contact center company in Japan, has chosen the Philippines over India as a launch pad for its entry into the English-language market.

TCI has also chosen to partner with business-mixed local call center firm Logicall Inc.

"The objective of this joint venture is for the Philippines and Logicall to become the primary English delivery location that will answer the growing demands of Transcosmos Inc.'s client base," Logicall CEO Archie Rodriguez said.

The Tokyo-based contact center giant is investing P120 million to help Logicall expand its capacity in the Philippines from 300 to 3,000 seats by 2011.

The partnership also enables Logicall to offer more value-added services such as multilingual support, digital marketing and analytics.

TCI and Logicall officials said in a briefing on Friday that TCI would be leveraging its stronghold on the Japanese electronics market to offer technical support and after-sales call center services in North America, Europe, and Australia. They said the Philippines in general and Logicall in particular had the right talent, quality of labor, scalability and voice accent with value-added needs.

TCI, which recently registered revenue of $1.6 billion, has an international footprint that concentrated on the Japanese market.

Its existing network of 22 delivery centers and IT support facilities in Japan, China, Korea and Thailand supports some of the world's biggest blue-chip companies.

Mahavi-based Logicall specializes in customer relationship management. It provides customer management solutions for technical support, communications, travel, health care, insurance, human resource and financial services for American and European clients.

Inflation seen at 9-year high in May

Turn to page B2

"As I have said before, we will remain vigilant and act preemptively and decisively once we see signs that our inflation outlook for 2009 is at risk and inflation expectations unhinged," concluded Tetangco. The BSP's stun-and-hold," Remigio said in a statement.

The upturn read of the forecast would imply the fastest increase in consumer prices since January 1999, when the inflation rate was recorded at 10.3 percent.

Tetangco said the higher inflation rate outlook for May was due to the surge in international oil prices, the climb in domestic pump prices as well as the provisional increase in transport fares.

"These supply shocks are also expected to affect food prices particularly those of rice, meat, fruits and vegetables and other miscellaneous food items," he said.

"These continue to be the most important factors behind the expected higher inflation this month," Tetangco said. "The peso depreciation may also have added pressure on consumer prices."

A weaker peso value against the dollar means that the cost of imports, such as oil, raw materials or consumer goods, likewise goes up.

Meanwhile, the BSP chief expressed that the increase in money supply in March was due to the jump in the central bank's net foreign assets. But he said the growth was tempered by the decline in net domestic assets.

The growth of credit extended to the public sector continued to be strong at 58.3 percent, although slightly lower than the 61.5-percent rate reported in the preceding month. Credit to the private sector also posted a slower growth of 3.6 percent from 10.1 percent in February.

Liquidity growth is an important indicator that the BSP closely monitors to ensure that monetary conditions are consistent with its goal of promoting price stability while supporting economic growth.

In a recent economic briefing hosted by Bombay Bank of Asia, BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the local central bank would use hesitate to take action if needed to ensure that the market's inflation expectations would not be far from its target.

The next policy rate setting of the BSP's policy-making Monetary Board is scheduled on June 5.

Based on recent indicators, Guinigundo said inflation expectations in the Philippines remained "well anchored" with the BSP's forecasts.

"But there's a risk. The risk is an oil price level that continues to go up almost without end. Your service calling about $130-$140 a barrel (based on US forecasts)," Guinigundo said.

The inflation targeting BSP has long conveyed that its goal of keeping the 2008 inflation rate below 5 percent was no longer attainable. However, it still insists that the 4.5-percent maximum inflation goal in 2009 could still be achieved.

Gov't itself said to stimulate use of imported fuel

By Abigail L. Ho

INSTEAD OF ENCOURAGING THE USE OF locally produced fuels, the government itself is going against efforts to achieve energy self-sufficiency by importing huge sums on indigenous fuels, an industry executive said.

Ricardo Tantoco, executive vice president and chief operating officer of the Lopez-led First Gas Power Corp., said that while the governments of Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand hardly imposed royalties on their indigenous fuels, the opposite was the case in the Philippines.

"The Filipino government, in effect, through our distorted tax policies, is encouraging the use of foreign fuels—thereby creating jobs in foreign countries—rather than helping in developing our domestic sources of fuel," he said in a statement.

With oil prices now averaging at around $130 a barrel, Tantoco said it would be crucial for the government to reorganize the need for measures that could help bring down fuel prices to affordable levels.

Natural gas, for example, was slapped a royalty rate of a high P1.79 per kilowatt hour (kWh), Tantoco said.

"Then there is the (expanded value-added tax) of 12 percent," he added. "That adds another 21 centavos per kWh, bringing the total to over P2 per kWh."

If these natural gas royalties could be scrapped altogether, First Gen Corp. president Federico Lopez said in an earlier interview that customers within the Manila Electric Co. franchise area would enjoy savings of between P1.50 centavos and P1.60 per kWh.

Mexico seems more than a third of its supply requirements from the country's 1,000-megawatt (MW) Sta. Rita and 500-MW San Lorenzo gas-fired power plants that First Gen owned.

Lopez said the government could opt to scrap the entire P1.16-per-kWh royalties, which would mean a nearly twenty-four of some $600 million, and bank on the additional revenues it could generate from higher taxes from industries.

The Manila consumers, he said, scrapping the natural gas royalties could translate to savings of around 30 centavos per kWh, with the distributor sourcing more than a third of its requirements from gas-fired plants.

WB backs RP social spending schemes

DUCK EXPERTS FLOCK TOGETHER
The Manila Economic and Cultural Office (Meco) arranged the recent visit of Dr. Jing-Tang Andrew Huang (left) and Dr. Lee Gwan Rong (third from left) of the Livestock Research Institute of Taiwan's Council of Agriculture. The visitors sensed the bird, egg of the endemic, 'With their ars Folk Valenzuela (second from left) of the Livestock Development Council, and Dr. Edwin Villar of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Forestry and Natural Resources Research and Development, Department of Science and Technology

Gov't urged to continue reform even with budget goal on hold

By Michelle V. Remo

THE PHILIPPINE GOVERNMENT'S decision to put its hold its balanced budget goal to 2010 will not adversely affect the World Bank's loan programme for the country, according to Ken Kuliman, World Bank director for the Philippines.

But the country's funding agency continues to urge the national government to ensure that additional public spending will already benefit the poor.

"We continue to support the government's reform program in the revenue agencies so as to guarantee sustainable financing for higher social spending," Hofman said in an e-mailed reply on queries about the bank's view of the government's decision to defer its deficit target for the year.

He added that the World Bank could not stress enough the importance of increased spending on "social programs and programs that actually target the poor."

One of the recently approved loans from the World Bank covers programs aimed at improving efficiency of government agencies, promoting revenue for the government, particularly the Bureau of Internal Revenue.

Another World Bank loan is for the rolling out the Conditional Cash Transfer program. Under the program, the government will distribute money to selected poor families who will send their children to school.

"We hope we can accelerate this rolling out by providing the government in implementing the Conditional Cash Transfer program," Hofman said.

Prior to the decision to defer the zero-deficit goal, the World Bank cautioned the government that any delay could affect the country's credibility in terms of sustaining efforts to improve the fiscal climate.

But analysts said the unabated rise in oil prices has left the government with little choice but to defer its deficit target for the year.

They said that the higher-than-original, if proportioned for the year—a move that will result in a budget deficit this year.

Rising oil and commodity prices were blamed largely for the slowdown in the economy's growth pace in the first quarter. Officials said higher spending would be needed to pump-prime the economy.

Due to tighter audit, gov't reports decline in TCC issuance

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE REported that there was a decline in the amount of tax credit certificates it issued to businesses in 2007, compared with that in 2006, as a tighter auditing system improved the authorities' ability to detect fraudulent claims for tax refunds and incentives.

The One-Stop Shop Tax Credit and Duty Drawback Center (OSS), a unit of the finance department that processes applications for tax credit certificates, reported that a total of P1.64 billion worth of TCCs were issued last year, slightly lower than the P1.87 billion recorded the previous year.

Ernesto Hanson, executive director of the OSS, also said in a statement that the amount of TCCs issued from 1998 to 2007 posted a yearly average of P3 billion, significantly lower than the P11.94 billion recorded from 1995 to 1999.

Hanson said his office continued to follow through on the re-engineering of the system of processing tax credit certificates that started in 2006. This was to protect government against false claims of tax refunds and credits, he said.

The figures on the amount of TCCs issued by the OSS were presented in a recent hearing on tax credit issuances conducted by the House committee on ways and means, headed by Rep. Exequiel Javier.

The hearing was intended to guide legislators in efforts to come up with a law that will rationalize the granting of fiscal incentives to businesses.

TCCs are papers stating that the government needs to refund a taxpayer because of excess payment of taxes and duties made previously. TCCs are also issued to companies that enjoy tax or duty exempt status.

Holders of TCCs are allowed to sell their documents to other companies. TCCs are usually sold at a discount to make it attractive to buyers, who may use them to pay off their tax obligations. The government loses revenues when buyers of bits or fractions of issued TCCs use them to pay taxes.

Adventurers seek sites off the beaten track

By Tita Arzino-Dantiao

TOURISTS THESE DAYS RARELY GO to museums. They no longer marvel at architectural and religious treasures like churches. They want to actually do something while taking in the sights and sounds of a new destination.

Thus explains the growing trend in sound adventure tourism that the Philippines needs to take advantage of, gifted as it is with natural resources just waiting for them in search of a different type of thrill and are willing to pay good money for the adrenaline rush.

For starters, there are good breaks on the Philippines' Pacific side. For mountain climbers, there are peaks suitable for both beginners and experts. And divers will not have enough time to take in the biodiversity in many parts of the country, from Anilao in Batangas to Apo Island in Negros Oriental and Tubbataha Reef in Palawan.

The Department of Tourism, however, needs help in promoting the Philippines as a top destination for adventure lovers under the Adventure Philippines campaign and Recreational (outdoor) Heritage, one of the country's leading retailers of outdoor gear, shoes and apparel, is stepping up to the challenge to do its part to promote the Philippines' treasures.

WHITE WATER
rafters get what they're after traversing this wild river.

Jimmy Thio, SOH chief executive officer and president, said in a statement that it was natural for SOH to join hands with the DOT as SOH was in the business of travel and is a pioneer in bring together the different outdoor clubs and adventurous souls who come to its shops for their gear and clothes.

"Because of our business, we travel. And we saw this emerging consciousness about the environment, about wellness and lifestyle. So this made us think: to the Philippines, we have the destinations and we know we have these outdoor communities, but they are so fragmented," Thio said. "But since we are in the retailing business, we thought we could be a catalyst and attract all these communities to open more [stores] to promote the Philippine destinations, lifestyle and wellness."

This is why SOH will help in the marketing of Adventure Philippines by, for instance, putting [SOH stores] in its stores, like brochures, before the eyes of shoppers to encourage SOH clients to avail themselves of Adventure Philippines tour packages.

SOH marketing manager Roel Chan added that SOH would help [SOH] tailor package the tours since it knows what the market is looking for, based on its customers with clients who patronize its top adventure brands, such as North Face and Jansport.

To get more kindred spirits into the Adventure Philippines campaign, SOH with the DOT will host the country's first summit on adventure tourism to help spur growers in the ecotourism and the potential of this travel trend.

The seminar is slated for June 3 to 4 at the Hotel Strasenburg at Clark Special Economic Zone with Russell Walters of the Adventure Travel Trade Association (Asia) giving an overview on the global adventure travel and outdoor recreation industry.

Also attending the discussions are experts on activities such as bird watching, caving, diving and trekking who will share their experiences with tour operators, travel agents, guides, suppliers and recreational clubs and societies.

Chan said a dedicated website would soon be set up to centralize all inquiries on the Adventure Philippines campaign. SOH agents would help in putting the content together as well as getting its clients to participate.

Tourism Secretary Ace Durano said in a statement that there was a need to heighten awareness of adventure tourism because even local tour operators do not know enough about it.

"When we looked at the various packages in the market...as far as adventure tours were concerned, they were so limited—rice terraces in Banaue and whale shark watching in Donsol. Most of our travel agents are not really outdoor people. They are not adventurers themselves so they just package what they know of," Durano said.

But with the tie-up with SOH, Durano was confident that more adventure tours would be packaged and promoted, especially since the Philippines is getting a good share of adventurers from Europe who are looking outside the beaten track.

"I believe that, eventually, Adventure Philippines will become one of our major products. Right now, we are offering is already one of our most important products ... and wellness is becoming very popular. Adventure will come next within a very short period of time," Durano said.

A mud-eye bit between Mayon Volcano and Mount Asog in Pampanga.

Baguio turns down neighbor's bid to run hydro plants

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—THE LOCAL GOVERNment of Itoba, Benguet, wants to take over Baguio's three mini-hydroelectric power plants, saying that these have become the town's assets because the plants operate in its territory.

Resolution 51, which was issued by the Itoba town council in March and which was sent to the city in April, asserts that the town has the capability to operate three mini-hydroelectric plants because of its huge water resources.

But the Baguio City council on May 19 turned down Itoba's demand.

In a report filed by the council's public utilities committee, Councilor Jusky Thomas Balloning, committee chair, said the city government would have to temporarily right over the plants and would continue operating them.

Balloning also pointed out that the local Government Code does not compel the city to turn over its assets to the host community merely upon its request.

The plants were built by the city's American administrators in the early 1900s and are located on city property, which the city government acquired in a trade-off with Itoba.

The city attended the plants' management to the Baguio Water District in the 1960s. The plants were rehabilitated in the 1990 by the Alcantara-owned Hydroelectric Development Corp. (Hedcor) until 2007.

The city reacquired management control over the plants last year when BWD's lease contract expired and has been running them since.

But with the Itoba government and residents of the plants' host communities have challenged Baguio's continued right to operate the plants.

The villagers said the city requires permission from the Energy Regulatory Commission before it can operate a power plant.

The villagers were also seeking compensation from the city because the plants were built on private lands.

RUSH SALE LOT
CUBAO MAHARLIKA ST. 11X20 SQM.
20 BTR FRONTAGE NEAR EDSA
FOR INDUSTRIAL USAGE WAREHOUSE
TERMINAL, OFFICE BLDG. HOSP. HOTEL SCHOOL
AMANTA HOUSE DIRECT BUYERS
0920-574-4888/844-0617/2828

BUSINESS

Citigroup expects peso to slip to 44.5:$1

Weak Q1 GDP growth weighing on sentiment

Printing by
PRINT TOWN

By Doris C. Dumlao

AMERICAN BANKING GIANT CITIGROUP sees the peso slipping to 44.50 against the US dollar in June before rebounding to 42 at the end of the year on the back of overseas Filipino remittances and increased government revenue collection.

In a May 26 commentary written by Citigroup economist for the Philippines Ari Tinsulat, the bank also said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas would likely keep its benchmark overnight borrowing rate unchanged at 5 percent for the rest of the year.

"But the risk of a limited and shallow rate tightening cycle late in the year cannot be ignored," the report said.

Citigroup said lackluster first quarter growth in the Philippines would not boost market sentiment, especially since the regional currency market was being threatened by jitters over the Indonesian rupiah.

It was earlier reported that the domestic economy grew by only 3.2 percent year-on-year in the first quarter, down from 7 percent a year ago and lower than the median consensus of 5 percent.

"Political risk due to violent protests against the Indonesian government's decision to hike fuel prices cannot be ignored as the peso's recent weakness has been highly correlated with the Indonesian rupiah," the report said.

Indonesia's oil price subsidies and the Philippines' rice price subsidies, it pointed out, could worsen if not addressed soon. The report added that the persistent oil-price risk had probably contributed to the negative investor perception for the peso and rupiah.

"Until/while Indonesia has taken steps to cut fuel subsidies, the Philippine government has not yet taken measures to slash its fairly rice-subsidy costs," the report said.

Lacking developments that could improve market sentiment, Citigroup had expected that the peso would overshoot 43.00 this week given end-month corporate demand.

But it said the BSP was likely to intervene to restrain the peso's depreciation.

The peso closed yesterday at 43.73 against the US dollar from Thursday's 43.928.

Meanwhile, Citigroup said the BSP's projected balance of payments surplus of $3.4 billion for this year would likely have no effect on inflation.

"This implies a lower current account surplus that's likely to be guaranteed by overseas remittances. According to BSP the peso's external competitiveness remains broadly unchanged," Citigroup said.

"We think further peso weakness with its acoustic external economy as measured by the BSP-tracked index and rising GDP [gross international reserves] could start to incite peso undervaluation. Without active intervention, this represents a growth loss to BSP's exchange rate policy," it said.

Citigroup said a buoyant tax growth and privatization proceeds would likely support a favorable fiscal picture this year.

"Privatization would provide an upside surprise in the second half of 2008 as there is potential to earn P66 billion from the sale of the government's holdings of SMC (San Miguel Corp.) or Petron shares," it said.

Citigroup said upbeat revenues arising from nominal price shocks also confirmed the government's sensitivity seen on the following:

- For every 1-percentage point hike in interest rates, the government estimates a net revenue increase of P5 billion;
- A 1-percentage point increase in inflation could result to a potential P10 billion in revenues; and
- A $1 per barrel increase in oil prices could result in P1 billion of net revenues.

PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Manguerra

SHOPPING AROUND FOR THE HOUSING LOAN THAT'S BEST FOR YOU?

Come to BPI Family Savings Bank, the established leader in housing loans for over 20 yrs.

BPI FAMILY SAVINGS BANK
Get started on tomorrow.

Build Dream

The design world of Generation Z

I RECENTLY SAW A BABY "ONESIE" bodysuit with a print that to simple terms defined Generation Z: "(n. 1. Offspring of Generation X and Y. 2. A group of individuals born from year 2000 to 2025. 3. The most adopted and connected generation to recognize, succeed and rule."

Because of their tiny little hands, well, in the future, group the world like they do now their cellies, this generation will be leading the way in terms of education, technology and social awareness. Generation Z will be the smallest generation relative to population we have grown into. It is also the youngest generation being governed by older parents (not necessarily families and in older states, with average age of 33.

Their lives will be shaped by technology and social networks such as mobile phones, computer games, they would never find known life without the Internet. And because their parents are older and more established, they are usually born into more stable, if not more affluent, financial conditions.

DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Jazbel

Interior Designer Association

The most tech savvy

While Generation Z will grow up to be the most tech savvy, their parents, the generation X and Yer's grew into cyberspace as their teens and have adapted fairly well to the tools of the present.

Generation Z is being born into Hyperspace and Facebook, online shopping and the exchange of international views, opinions and personalities. In terms of design, they are expected to products of new technology. While most of the furniture and accessories are from: resin bakelite, plastic, metal and wood, Generation Z is being born into aluminum, titanium, polyurethane, kevlar, nylon fiber, low emissivity glass and good old (but sustainably managed and tree-farmed) wood products.

Like any baby, Generation Z is being born into the whims, constraints and preferences of its parents. While the Baby Boomers had to content themselves with physically shopping through the strip malls and specialty shops of their era, Generation X and Y have the convenience and assurances brought about by Internet shopping. With abundant information crossing global borders, furniture pieces, décor and even design concepts available for Generation Z are unprecedentedly abundance and variety.

Global assessment

This day, nursery pieces for this new generation have evolved to much more sophisticated design and functional pieces. While most consumers and Gen Zers will move home in to very limited and traditional nursery furniture, Generation Z has a global assessment to be born into.

In contrast to nursery pieces of those bygone era, Generation Z—and their parents—enjoy the convenience of lightweight strollers, hydraulic high chairs, unconventional color schemes, microwave sterilizers, convertible cribs, edgy-design prams and easy-use bassinets. They are also born into more stringent health and safety guidelines and parameters. Many years of both research and experience have provided a foundation for the development of functionality and décor for this generation that is unprecedented.

After looking at what this present world has to offer, it makes me wonder what Generation Z will grow up to be like. Born into a world of ecological awareness, high technology and intelligent parents, it will be interesting to see what they in turn will indulge themselves—and their babies of tomorrow's—with.

FURNISHINGS for Generation Z: from top left, clockwise: high chairs of the future, a combination of hydraulics, plastics, alloy and fabrics; a sleek and streamlined modern crib; a hip and contemporary interpretation of a baby pram; crossover or Maxi-Cosi car seat with aforementioned body and stainless steel legs

High oil prices boost Empire East's transit-oriented condo sales

THE RECORD-SETTING PRICES OF OIL in the international market—$135 per barrel and may even top $200 by 2010, according to analysts—have boosted the sales of Empire East's three transit-oriented residential condominium projects.

"With gasoline now at P50 to a liter and signs that prices may not ease in the future, many car owners and aspiring homeowners have realized that they can weather the escalating prices of gasoline by investing in our transit-oriented condominiums," Empire East Land Holdings Inc. President Antonio Cabangbang Tu shared.

He was referring to San Lorenzo Place, Pioneer Woodlands and Little Baguio Terrace. San Lorenzo Place will be beside the MegaSaver stop of the MRT3, Pioneer Woodlands across the Boni MRT station and Little Baguio Terrace between the Gilmore and Boni stops of the LRT2.

"Since all three projects are near the train stations, this eliminates the need to have a car and consequently, the purchase of gasoline products. Malate, Ortigas and the emerging business districts of Pasig, Taguig and Antonio Comer are all accessible through the train stations. The train is also traffic-proof and offers a more environment-friendly way of traversing the metro," Tu added.

Living in a transit-oriented residential condominium is also the future way of living, according to Tu. He noted that many successful condominium projects in first-world cities such as New York, Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo follow this same formula.

PIONEER Woodlands residents will get a luxury to both the Makati and Ortigas CBDs via the MRT Boni station.

LITTLE Baguio Terrace puts home within a few minutes of the U-bold via LRT2.

Living in a transit-oriented residential condominium is also the future way of living, according to Tu. He noted that many successful condominium projects in first-world cities such as New York, Singapore, Hong Kong and Tokyo follow this same formula. Since it makes travel very convenient and affordable.

Convenience and affordability are the trademarks of Empire East, the country's leading developer for the mid-income market. A studio unit (ranging from studio to 2-bedroom) for all three projects can be secured for only P26,000. Amortizations start at only P8,700 for the first two years, as the case for a Pioneer Woodlands studio unit.

All three projects also feature a varied list of amenities that have been especially designed for families of mid-income earners. These include swimming pools, landscaped gardens and grand entrance lobbies.

Among the completed mid-income projects of Empire East are California Garden Square, Governor's Hills and San Francisco Gardens in Mandaluyong City; Laguna Bel-Air in Sta. Rosa; The Tavlin Hills and Gilmore Heights in San Juan City, and Kingswood in Makati City.

With homeowners who look at a lifetime of savings from their rent, buying prices of all ring-cull P10-2222 for more attractive rise on Empire East's transit-oriented developments.

A scenic 95-hectare property centrally located within the vast 1,000 hectare Carmelcraig Estate that is being developed today as the next Mega City of the country

Carmeltown pays homage to the rich history and culture of Carmelcraig

Where a mere handshake marks a gentlemen's commitment

Where living is simple and nature is...simply beautiful

Where family values and traditions are nurtured and... where life is indeed...Celebrated!

Town Features and Amenities:
Security and Privacy
Fully integrated utilities (Meralco, PLDT, Internet, Cable/Wire, Wastewater Treatment facilities, etc.)
Fully landscaped, well lighted concrete streets
Proximity to schools, hospitals, malls, hot springs and resorts
The Village Central - our very own commercial center
The Mills Country Club - the First World Class Country Club in the South

Come home to Carmeltown... your home... your town...

Where We Celebrate Life!

Carmeltown | Another Landmark Development of | Carmelcraig Mining Reserve

SAN RAMON Private Residential Community | SEAFICIA Business Park and Residences | Private Property Homeowners Association

Visit our SM Sta. Rosa Office at the 2nd floor or call (049) 502-10-56 / (02) 989-12-70.

Brittany creating vertical dev'ts responsive to market needs

LITERALLY AND FIGURATIVELY AMONG the fastest rising property developers in the vertical segment, nationwide real estate developer Brittany Corp. has been making great heights in the three short years it has embarked on high-rise development. A proud member of Vista Land & Lifescapes Inc., the country's largest home builder, Brittany has not only been changing the skyline of Manila but has also dramatically shifted the industry's perception to meeting vertical development that are responsive to the discriminating needs of today's market.

Largely responsible for this growth in the three-year P1 billion investment is has allocated specifically for the country's central business district, along with the continued strengthening of its development in the prospective Makati locale. Proud of this is Monaco Towers Manila, Monaco de Gampaguita and Avant at The Fort which undoubtedly established Brittany's presence as a major player in the high-rise segment.

AVANT AT THE FORT. Avant's green architecture lets you feel peace and serenity at the heart of a bustling community.

AVANT is just as well designed on the inside as it is outside.

Overwhelming market response

"Our entry into the vertical developments utilized the same approach and philosophy as our master-planned communities - delivering here decades of expertise while employing modern techniques and materials," said Vicente Joseph Peralta, CEO of Brittany Corp. "Now, some percent of the units at Monaco at Greenhills were sold within the first two months since it was initially offered to the public. The brisk sales came on the positive response of the market to our innovations. Furthermore, it speaks volumes with regard to the confidence of our clients in this relatively new endeavor that we have embarked in," Peralta added.

Monaco is a condominium that is patronized by residents that with an appropriate mix of commercial establishments to service the needs of its residents. Aptly called a mosaic of condos, the units are designed with a greater degree of flexibility in mind to accommodate the varied requirements of the homeowners—be it a single unit, family, or a family.

Hitting targets

"We also recently held the back-to-back groundbreaking of Monaco and Avant which successfully demonstrated our ability to deliver to our clients, despite having a more dense-type experience in this segment of the property industry," Peralta exclaimed.

Avant at The Fort has been blowing the wall with its sweeping interior and design and the positioning of grass circ. Though it has gained a reputation for being the embodiment of the oasis of green in the concrete, having adopted the philosophy of environmental responsiveness, this 58-story residential condominium offers far more advantages to its residents. Foremost of which is its prime location. It occupies what is perhaps the last remaining area within the much-sought after golden triangle of this prime community at the heart of the Bonifacio Global City.

The innovative spirit that has been the signature of Brittany's master-planned communities is also behind the unique features that our vertical developments have come to embody. BC Mosaic, for instance, combines modern property development with the distinctive tradition of art previously. Further down, it continued the success of its predecessor, the Mosaic at Greenbelt, especially in terms of market response," Jovenaco explained. Located on Legaspi Street, the 31-story BC Mosaic is a joint venture with the Ralmo Ledesma family.

Greater appeal

With the unique blend of masterplanning and array of amenities it offers, Avant and BC Mosaic have become the properties of choice among a variety of end-users. Both have proven to be the ideal property address for successful businessmen and professionals on the lookout for added property investments. Accessibility to retailers, comforts and the luxurious standards they espouse, on the other hand, make Avant and BC Mosaic an appealing choice among the expat community and corporate-assigned employees.

"As we speak, the Grand Quarter I, Brittany's mid-rise condominium development at Crosswinds in Tagaytay is preparing for the turnover of units to homeowners. We have various properties in different stages of development in key growth areas. I believe we can say with confidence that Brittany is not merely a player in the vertical property but has evolved itself into creating well-established and strong presence in this segment. And our clients can only expect more innovations as we continue to grow," concluded Jovenaco.

Brittany is currently developing a number of innovative and creative blueprints with master-planned developments designed to showcase stylistic and thematic appeal, such as Avant and Grenada and excellent condominium ship, it successfully and consistently rests within the local real estate landscape.

A LAP pool with a cascading waterfall feature is just one of the many pleasure and leisure points on offer at One Central's seventh level play deck.

ONE CENTRAL
A sales success story unfolds

FOR A REAL ESTATE DEVELOPER headlined as "The Grand Address of Success," One Central... the name ambitious, seem expensive project to date of No. 1 residential and business process outsourcing (BPO) condominium development Megaworld Corp.—has become a winner in itself.

"We are thrilled that One All started has responded strongly to One Central. They have validated that its prime location in the Makati CBD, iconic Art Deco architecture and wonderful mix of luxurious amenities altogether combine for a 'Triple A' investment," declared Megaworld Chairman Andrew Tan of the project he described as flagship.

After only three months since its launch last February, One Central has already taken more than 60 percent of its units, according to Legaspi. "This is a strong indicator that One Central will be the ultimate marketing success story in a few months," he predicted. Moreover, he revealed that One Central buyers only come from the most exclusive set, millionaire entrepreneurs, professionals like lawyers and doctors, high-flying executives and discriminating investors.

Located at the corner of Rizal Drive and Arnaiz Avenue, One Central rises majestically right at the thick of the action within the Makati central business district (CBD). They are also just a stone's throw away from embassies, a short walk to dwelling hotels and resorts, and within the immediate vicinity of the country's two foremost malls.

Architecture

Megaworld's longtime collaboration architectural firm Leandro Locsin Partners was tapped anew to design the P12.5-billion, two-tower One Central. Its 56-storey-high twin architecture pays homage to the groundbreaking Art Deco movement in New York City during the 1920s...the most famous exemplars of which are the Chrysler and Empire State buildings. At night, even One Central's distinctive apex is illuminated, the two-tone canvas of the building and its Triple A residents become more evident.

Meanwhile, the amenities have been designed to elevate residents. As they approach the building, they will be greeted by the entry lanes flank to the Makati CBD. It will feature tall trees, flowering plants and a cascading water feature.

Landscape architectural designs firm Gerry Chicago designed the grand lobby with a corner piece chandelier and Old English paintings to give residents a opulent welcome at night fall. A concierge service operating 24 hours fulfills even the most demanding wishes of its elite residents.

Just at the entrance, concierge schedules are seen to be packed, their family playtime at One Central will surely be carved side, according to Megaworld. More than 20 luxurious amenities await residents at the seventh floor play deck. A lap pool and kiddie pool with a waterfall feature are recommended for those who love the water.

Innovators who want to keep their brains in tip-top shape will surely frequent the sky lounge and library. Private gathering can be easily arranged whether at the business center, bar lounge, mini-theater or library. Meeting friends for moonwhile will surely find the game room, theater center, lit lounge and play areas valuable treasures of their glory condo condo at One Central.

Not to mention enough, all residences in One Central are delivered fully furnished, thus making move-in all the more easy for unit buyers.

Philconstruct the only one world-class show

MORE THAN 1,000 MANUFACturers from around the world will be showcasing their latest products, services and technologies at Philconstruct 2008 – 19th Philippine International Construction Equipment & Building Materials Exhibition, Technology Forum, Incorporated in Philconstruct are HVAC/R Philippines '08, Mining Asia '08 and Modern Home Expo '08.

The exhibition will open its doors to the public on Nov. 13-16 at the newly constructed and world-class SMX Convention Center located beside the Mall of Asia.

The construction industry's largest annual international event features more than 25,000 square meters of indoor and outdoor exhibition space showcasing the latest products, services and technologies from more than 800 exhibiting companies. By far, Philconstruct 2008 is the biggest exhibition of its kind ever put together in Philippine soil generating over US$50-million worth of business and investments annually.

Philconstruct is one of the few trade shows around the world that has been selected by the prestigious Concept organizers to partner with and featured in their mega shows in China and the United States," said Anthony Fernandez, president of the Philippine Constructors Association, organizer of the show.

Philconstruct is not only a venue to display the latest products and services, but also an intelligence form to meet the industry's key decision makers. Over 50,000 registered trade buyers from all over the country and several the region are expected to visit the show. Philconstruct is only the country's No. 1 exhibition and business conference.

PHILCONSTRUCT attracts the industry's VIP such as Environment Secretary Lito Atienza, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Sonny Lim and various representatives of the country's top developers because of its show size and world-class showcase.

It also held simultaneously with Philconstruct 2008 is the Technoforum program. This year, the forum will tackle four main topics that are most relevant to the construction business today: 1) new technology; 2) information technology; 3) equipment; and, 4) project management.

PCA, being the organizers and voice of the industry, will be working very closely with the Philippine Wire Safety and Environment Association (PWSEA), the Philippine Society of Installing, Air-Conditioning and Refrigerating Engineers (PSAARE) and the Philippine Institute of Interior Designers (PIID) to ensure the success of all its participants and an overall boost for the construction industry.

Philconstruct 2008 is an all in one mega-event featuring special projects and action areas including a New Technology Pavilion, Construction Grand Convention and Battle de Male'a Interior design competition. The show will continue to make waves in the industry to further emphasize on the goals set by PCA: to serve the industry, to serve our customers and to ensure that this industry progresses toward global success because Philconstruct is the only event organized by the industry for the industry," Fernandez added.

On the early stage, over 700 booths and 150 commercial construction equipment will be on display both indoor and outdoor, representing pavilions and action areas from 25 countries and product representatives from China, Germany, Italy, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan, United States and the United Kingdom," said Jerry Espiritu, chair of Philconstruct and first vice president of the PCA.

More reasons to live at Eton Parkview Greenbelt

ETON PARKVIEW GREENBELT IS A RESidential sanctuary that provides a multitude of privileges. Lucio Tan-owned real estate developer Eton Properties Philippines has made condo living a more refreshing experience with amenities that go beyond the basics.

"We take necessary steps to give our clients more than they ask for," said Jaime Ongpin, president and chief executive officer. "To show our commitment to quality we will develop a unique serenity first area. As a start, we have designed a bird-eton pool that is eco-friendly. This creates a more refreshing atmosphere," explained Ongpin. Eton Properties vice president for Business Development and project general manager.

Unique to the project is its location which is in front of two exclusive parks. Future residents can enjoy unobstructive views of the Washington Sycip Park and Legaspi Park, two of the few remaining open areas in Makati. "To maximize the view, we have provided a garden that doubles as a view corridor from the Greenbelt area to the park. By connecting the two, the view deck will provide a truly enjoyable experience," Cano reveals.

Choice venue

In addition to these innovative developments, there is a function room at the amenity floor that will be the choice venue for important family celebrations. Staying fit and healthy is also easy with the convenience of having a gymnasium near residences. The condominium is also near with the convenience of having a gymnasium near residences. The condominium is also near with the convenience of having a gymnasium near residences. And while at the gym, parents can bring their kids to the children's play area or to the tiot kiddie pool.

Aimed at successful professionals working in the Makati CBD and nearby business centers who are looking for a place to own and invest in, the 33-story Eton Parkview Greenbelt offers home value with its enviable address near Greenbelt where residents will enjoy a truly cosmopolitan lifestyle.

The world-class community, boutiques, expert retailers and cinemas of the Greenbelt Malls are a short walk away.

Spacious and stylish 1-bedroom loft units are available. One can choose from a 1-bedroom loft type, a 2-bedroom loft unit or convertible units for added space flexibility. Investment in Makati's Central Business District, Eton Parkview Greenbelt is set to become an other landmark development from Eton Properties, the fastest growing real estate company in the country.

A FREE-FORM pool is set to complete Eton Parkview Greenbelt's resort-oriented rooftop amenities.

Real estate festival at Mall of Asia

THE PHILIPPINE REAL ESTATE Festival, a gathering of the country's top real estate builders and developers, will be staged at the SMX Convention Center Mall of Asia Complex, on July 24-26.

The three-day Philippine Real Estate Festival (PREF) will be a grand showcase of the flagship projects, prime developments, housing products and services of the country's top real recognized real estate builders and developers and Asked industries.

Bigger stage

According to Rose Sison-Guerrero, director of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Associations (CREBA), PREF will gather "over 150 of the country's top real estate developers, along with exhibitors from the allied sectors and industries...making it one of the biggest real estate events of 2008.

"We wanted to bring the Philippine Real Estate Festival to a bigger stage this time and there was no better choice than to hold it in the biggest venue, which is the SMX Convention Center," said Sison, who also serves as vice president for Marketing Communications and Foundation Affairs for Megaworld Corporation. Michelle Tan and vice chair of the Cebu Social Housing Foundation.

"There is indeed a very good plan on our part to elevate a real estate exhibition to higher expectations," Sison added.

Leading the event for us Vice President Mel de Castro, Senate President Manny Villar, and Congressman Rodolfo Valencia.

The PREF has also lined up numerous activities that make the various buyer understand the housing or the real estate industry in general.

Seminars and lectures

The public can attend the free seminars and lectures designed to help them know how to shop for a new home or condominium, avail of housing loans from the government or the private sector, compare real estate terms and other relevant topics.

The seminars and lectures will be conducted by speakers who are experts in their respective fields.

Highlight of the event will be the staging of the Miss Real Estate Philippines 2008, who will eventually compete in the first-ever Miss Real Estate Asia.

Likewise, the 2nd BOSW (Builders Asia Real Estate Who's Who) Awards Night recognize the top performers and achievers in the real estate sector, will also be launched in the Philippine Real Estate Festival.

Organizers of The Philippine Real Estate, led by the Cebu, have tied up with different organizations, both local and foreign, which include the international associations, allied industries and allied organizations to ensure the participation from all sectors.

The tatami room: creating versatile space

I REMEMBER ATTENDING A TALK GIVEN by Jesus Geronimo Mendoza of UP about low-cost housing. I was then fresh out of college, so—ano—that must have been several pesobils ago. They were discussing a low-cost housing development in Bagac-Dagalupa where the floor area per unit was 36 square meters.

The late architect, Ipe Mendoza, who was also a participant, remarked that that was too small and considered it to be of subhuman standards. That could have been because the latter was used to designing homes for the elite wherein 36 square meters may be the size of a regular bedroom.

Today, a 36-sq.m. studio/room or flat is not unheard of. A space with dimensions of 6 m x 6 m can allow for two bedrooms. Certainly, the majority of people in Metro Manila live in spaces even smaller than this, particularly those living in densely populated areas.

Indigenous houses

If we look back, our indigenous houses may have been of the same size too. The "Sanday kubo kalot sinank," the stone houses of Batanes, the Ifugao huts and the Bontoc houses on stilts were more—all have very small floor areas. Many of our Filipino brothers have lived decently in small spaces like these all their lives.

These houses had a floor space of merely 15 sq.m. yet allowed a family of four or five to live comfortably inside. Most of these native structures ingeniously apply the principles of passive cooling. In addition, good ventilation, multifunctionality of space and minimal furnishings are key concepts.

Changing our lifestyle

They came—our colonizers and changed all that. They started "civilizing" and changing our lifestyle and made us believe that we need king-size mansions to fulfill our homes, with formal and informal dining rooms that can seat at least eight, clean kitchens and dirty kitchens, and a 7-piece sofa set—that we need up morning as it does not suffice dare bare-faced.

These had to come with a well-appointed toilet with double wash basins, bidet, separate shower and tub, and a huge walk-in closet, sometimes bigger than a low-cost house. This was the "way of life" our colonizers went to such lengths to preserve, and, sadly, they have succeeded. It is no. Sorta many upwardly mobile urbanites still aspire for dream homes such as this.

This is why when planning homes, as a standard, designers try to fit in the usual amenities in a given space: living room, dining room, kitchen, toilet/s, bathroom/s, etc. No matter how small the area is, or how prohibitive the cost of land, space and construction, the average Filipino cannot seem to compromise all of these even from his checklist. However, it is also true that the average Filipino cannot afford his very western abilities anymore.

The challenge is for builders to conceptualize a model that really caters to the average Filipino. We must come up with an alternative concept to living areas that more would be able to afford. What would a decent, practical Filipino home be like? I believe that the size of a house does not make it decent or indecent. Decency hinges on one's way of living, how one utilizes space and resources. In fact, it is wasteful times that is indecent.

Living in a Ryokan

Last week, I experienced living in a Ryokan, a traditional Japanese inn, in Kyoto, the ancient capital of Japan. In a place where the size of any room is measured by the number of tatami mats fitted in it, well-each mat measuring 3 ft by 6 ft., the room was only to tatami mats large. In other words: less than 12 sq.m.

During the day, it was where our daily activities were done; and at night, it converted into a bedroom. In that room, there is an unbreakable whereby you remove and put on your slippers into shoes are allowed inside the ryokan), a closet wherein clothes and bed things are stored, and a natural, decorative alcove. The room itself is slightly elevated to keep the out.

However, our ryokan room had our maid's quarters which was not common in traditional houses, a compact toilet facility. Although only roughly two sq m the toilet space included a sink, a water closet and a Japanese bathtub! The experience of living in an almost authentically Japanese setting was magnificent.

Some people may consider the Japanese tatami room quite bare, but it is the very simplicity and openness of the design that allows it a wonderful diversity of uses. The sense of remaining versatile spaces lies not in the tatami, but in the number it encourages and signifies: cleanliness, orderliness, comfort and flexibility.

I am certain that the indigenous Filipino home style was similar to this one, although I have to concede that the curiously Japanese seats are more comfortable to walk or sit on than our local bamig. The low dining table is similar to our pasag or dulang, which is about 14 inches off the ground, and wherein one sits on the floor or chair. The shoji screens or sliding doors that can be kept open or allow for more light and air are comparable in concept to our frosted or louvred windows.

Minimum area

Now, the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) has cut the minimum area for a condo development at 12 sq.m. If developers are serious about scaling down units to meet the selling cost, it may be time to detach oneself from the dictates of western culture and think about looking back to our very own. We could scale down the dimensions not just of rooms, but likewise of furniture. We could also use lighter materials to cut fixed costs and minimize the architectural embellishment.

But more basically, we need to rethink the layout of our homes. We must admit that there are rooms and areas we do not really need and can do without. We have to recognize which areas are necessary and most used and focus our design efforts on these. Maybe, then, we can descend the home-style that suits the Filipino best.

For your comments, please send e-mail to metrosquatter@yahoo.com.

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzman Jr.

A VIEW of a 6-tatami room in a Japanese Ryokan in Kyoto

A LUXURY room set up for dining

Great paint jobs start with great quality paints

HOTLINE 840-8801

GRAND LAUNCH TODAY!

Where real living begins...

SOUTH SPRINGS
RESIDENTIAL ESTATE
Biñan, Laguna

Janine found a new friend

A refreshing dip at the clubhouse pool

Sweating it out never felt this good

Meet and Greet On
2008 Miss Philippines Earth Winners
and
2007-2008 PBA All Filipino Cup Champion
Sta. Lucia Realtors

Goofing around with my pals

Flower Festival

South Springs' Flores de Mayo and Groundbreaking of Community Clubhouse

on Saturday, 31 May 2008
Registration starts at 9:00 a.m.
at the Project Site

Avail of Special
LAUNCH DISCOUNTS

Spending quality time with my son

For inquiries, visit us at the 2/F of SM City Sta. Rosa or call (049) 502-1056 / (02) 900-1270.

Landowner:

Another Landmark Development of:
STA. LUCIA REALTY & DEVELOPMENT, INC.
www.stalucialty.com

Exclusive Marketing Network:
ORIENTAL PROPERTY MARKETING CORPORATION

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Mangaoang

Solving hypertension's deadly puzzle

By Charles E. Bakar

HYPERTENSION OR WHAT is commonly called as high blood pressure is a serious, relentless killer that affects over 1 billion people worldwide.

With such a significant portion of the world's population in danger of suffering from sudden heart attack, heart failure, kidney failure, stroke or premature death (six feet, twice as deadly as diabetes and as hypertension), it became the mission of various groups from 80 countries to make the public know about the seriousness of this condition.

The World Hypertension Day was thus created and is observed every 17th of May.

Who's this important?

According to Dr. Yolanda Oliveros, director of Department of Health's Disease Prevention and Control, a nationwide survey conducted last year by the Philippine Heart Association found that 1 out of 3 adults are afflicted with hypertension. (In percent are not aware they have the condition and only 20 percent are able to control their high blood pressure.

"Steps should be taken to address this issue as this will definitely impact on their health later on in their life," Oliveros said.

Growing need

The health office added that because of this, there is a growing need to properly diagnose and manage hypertension in the country.

"The DOH is pleased to join the PHA, Philippine Society of Hypertension, and healthcare company Novartis in this initiative to help Filipinos learn more about hypertension and the possible risks associated with undetected and untreated high blood pressure," Oliveros said.

To help increase hypertension awareness and control in the country, the PHA initiated the Excellence Center last February, which will conduct a study to help doctors improve blood pressure control among Filipino patients.

The study aims to identify and evaluate physician-related factors that affect the management of Filipino hypertensives in Metro Manila.

Great strides

"Proper treatment should be undertaken, once the hypertension is detected and diagnosed," stressed Dr. Ramon Alcaraz Jr., PHA founding chair.

Novartis Healthcare Philippines President Peter Goldschmidt agreed. "As a global leader in the treatment of hypertension and cardiovascular disease, Novartis aims to provide better treatment options to more Filipino patients by constantly developing and making available therapeutic and pharmacological innovations."

Novartis, in fact, introduced to the market an innovative new blood pressure treatment that works differently than other medicines available today.

The drug called aliskiren (Rasilez) targets an enzyme in the patient's body called renin that triggers a process leading to high blood pressure.

By inhibiting renin, aliskiren has been shown to provide blood pressure reductions that last beyond 24 hours.

LEADING the World Hypertension Day ceremonies are (left to right) Peter Goldschmidt, president and CEO of Novartis Healthcare Philippines, while looking on are (from left) Dr. Elmo Vicaldo, president, Philippine Heart Association; Dr. Yolanda Oliveros, director, Department of Health; and Dr. Ramon Alcaraz Jr., founding chair, Philippine Society of Hypertension.

Helpful hints for healthy heart

WITH HEART DISEASE being the No. 1 killer in the Philippines, it's time we start living more conscious about our heart health.

Do you spread most of your time in the couch? Constantly fill up on chips and sugary sweets? Smile for a cigarette after a stressful morning? Since by knowing these bad habits and then take those tips to begin a new, more heart healthy lifestyle.

1 **Stop smoking.** Quitting smoking is the single most important thing a person can do to live longer. Smokers are twice as likely to have a heart attack than a nonsmoker.

2 **Consume less salt.** Many people are surprised to find out that the amount of salt they consume every day could be putting their health at risk. Too much salt can cause high blood pressure, which increases the risk of developing coronary heart disease. Adults should consume less than 6 grams of salt a day. Checking food labels for nutritional information can help you choose healthier options.

3 **Balance your diet.** Try having a balanced diet, containing plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, oily fish and starchy foods such as whole-grain bread and pasta. This becomes specially important after the holiday season when consumption of unhealthy food and alcohol spikes alarmingly. A healthy diet can help reduce the risk of developing heart disease, and can also help increase the chances of survival after a heart attack.

4 **Exercise for your heart.** Because the heart is a muscle, it needs exercise to pump blood efficiently around your body. To ensure you get enough exercise, you should aim for 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a day. If this seems too daunting, start off gently and build up gradually.

5 **Drink low-fat milk.** A 25-year-long study, involving men in Scotland between the ages 35 and 64, found that death from heart disease was 8 percent higher among men who drank less milk. But it is important to watch what milk you drink because milk fat is one of the largest sources of saturated fat in adults' diets. Ensure with fiber, for instance, has low cholesterol, low sodium, low saturated fat and no trans-fat. It also has a unique heart defense system to help prevent cholesterol buildup and help control blood pressure. It's also rich in fiber and antioxidants to help keep the heart protected.

The water on Mars

DISCOVER

Maxxie Santos Ballon

AT THE NORTH POLE OF THE PLANET Mars, on top of the thin Martian Antarctic ice sheet, National Aeronautics and Space Administration's spacecraft Phoenix that landed a week ago, is a mere LEGO-sprawling former "land permanently buried" explorers of the red planet.

Titled "Terror of Mars," the video that was compiled by the nonprofit organization The Planetary Society and was supposedly designed to lure the researchers. It contains messages to Mars-striders or explorers from well-known figures. Mars-inspired science fiction art and stories in written and audio form and the names of approximately 300,000 people who signed up to have their names sent to the red planet.

While the information stored on that disc waits to be accessed, its cache is studying Mars' radioactive ice to see if the frozen water might once have been able to support life.

Phoenix's mission is part of Nasa's "Follow the Water" reasoning, which says that since Earth's species need water to live, water must have been a prerequisite for life on Mars.

Even as the spacecraft gets ready to dig into the frozen soil to collect samples of the ice believed to be just under earth's ground level though, a new study suggests that the water on the red planet's surface has been too salty to support life as we know it.

Geochemists Nicholas Tosca and his adviser Knoll from Harvard University and Tosca's former mentor Scott McLennan at the State University of New York during Brook authored the study, which appeared in the May 30 issue of the journal Science.

The researchers based their conclusion on the calculated water activities of rocks collected by the Mars Rover named Opportunity on its site of Mars known as the Meridiani Planum.

Lure, lure places for life

"Meridiani Planum," Tosca said for colleague views in their paper, "may have been among the least favorable places on the early martian surface." The area has hematite, which suggested there were hot springs in the area once.

Water activity refers to the chemical availability of the liquid for life processes. Human bodies can take in freshwater from a river, for example, but not saltwater from the sea. Pure water has a water activity of 1.0, and most of Earth's organisms thrive in water activity between 0.99 and 0.90.

In contrast, the Meridiani waters are estimated to have had water activities in the 0.78-0.68 range. Some parts of Mars, the researchers added, might have even held liquids up to 0.99 water activity. But the experiments Knoll's buddies on high-salt solvent organisms called halites.

Extreme salinity

"On that basis," the study authors wrote, "the identification of halite as the martian postevaporite sediment subsalt, and brines that would not be inhabitable by known terrestrial counterparts."

Does this study mean the Phoenix's mission search journey from Florida to Mars and its successful landing on the red planet's surface were in vain? Not necessarily, according to study co-author Knoll, who is also part of the science teams for the Mars Rovers Spirit and Opportunity, the results don't rule out the possibility that life existed. Instead, the study contradicts the long-held belief that the planet could once support life like Earth does.

"This overall suggests quite strongly that even as long as four billion years ago, the surface of Mars would have been challenging for life," Knoll said in a statement. "He said he [now for Knoll on past visit Mars' history, we may never see a point at which the planet really looked like Earth."

Mars' past was so inhospitable to Earth's organisms that it seems unlikely to change in the future. Long-term human colonies on Mars may therefore only ever exist in science fiction. That's still not a guarantee, however, that the "Visions of Mars" disc will be forever tossed in its case.

E-mail the author at maxxie@maxxie.com.

Bariatric surgery: the best solution for the severely obese

CAREPLUS

Christine E Lieonga

TO LOSE EXCESS POUNDS, MOST people go on a diet, exercise regularly, or take over-prescribed weight-loss medications. Such traditional weight-loss methods may not be enough for the over 4 million Filipinos suffering from obesity.[1] My son's problem is a close friend, a one of them. I thought that his excess weight was worsening his health woes, which included recurring knee pain and a host of medical conditions.

Being obese is a lot worse than being simply overweight. Health experts now consider obesity as a disease that increases a person's risk of developing type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke, gallbladder disease, osteoarthritis, sleep apnea, infertility and certain forms of cancer, to name just a few.[2]

Body mass index

But others does one does the line between overweight and obesity? To start, consider this: Obesity experts use the body mass index or BMI which is computed by dividing a person's weight (in kilograms) by the square of his/her height (in meters).

Based on the US National Institutes of Health, a normal BMI is between 18 and 24.9; a person with a BMI below this range may be underweight. A BMI of 25 to 29.9 is considered overweight, and falls under the category of pre-obesity, particularly if the person's fat deposits are concentrated on his/her waist and hips (normal fat distribution).

A person with a BMI of 30 to 34.9 is considered mildly obese; 35 to 39.9 moderately obese; and a BMI of 40 and above severely obese.

Best solution

For obese people who have tried unsuccessfully to lose weight using conventional methods previously mentioned, bariatric surgery may be the best solution, according to Dr. Edward Oliveros, a bariatric surgery specialist at the Clinical Nutrition and Weight Management Center of St. Luke's Medical Center (SLMC).

"Bariatric surgery is not purely a cosmetic surgery," Dr. Oliveros stresses. "It is a surgical treatment for obesity and its associated health problems."

Two standards

Bariatric surgery promotes significant and sustained weight loss by restricting and/or altering the gastrointestinal (digestive) tract. Dr. Oliveros details the two standards of Bariatric surgery: Gastric bypass surgery is an irreversible procedure that involves reducing the size of the stomach and bypassing the small intestine. The other is done by fashion and malabsorption of food.

On the other hand, adjustable gastric banding (lap-band surgery) involves the placement of a hollow silicone band around the upper part of the stomach. The band can be adjusted to control the weight loss depending on the patient's weight loss; it can be removed anytime. To date, it is the safest and only reversible and adjustable form of Bariatric surgery. These two surgeries are usually done laparoscopically, meaning multiple small incisions, performed with long instruments guided by video.

People with an excess weight of 40 lb (18 kg) or more are ideal candidates for bariatric surgery," Dr. Oliveros says. "Gastric bypass results in a 70 percent excess weight loss in 1 to 2 years while adjustable gastric banding or Lap-Band surgery leads to a 40 percent excess weight loss in 1 to 2 years."

Wise investment in health

Dr. Oliveros believes that Bariatric surgery is a wise investment in health. Tracking nine patients of overweight and obesity study can prevent the complications of excess weight such as heart disease, diabetes and arthritis, thereby reducing long-term healthcare costs, he explains.

Aside from Bariatric surgery, the St. Luke's Clinical Nutrition and Weight Management Center offers a comprehensive weight management program supervised by a multidisciplinary team of specialists. "The center is the only one of its kind in the country," notes Dr. Oliveros. He explains that the successful weight management program involving diet and exercise usually takes a minimum of three months and results in a 5.5- to 11.25 kg) or more weight loss a month. The program includes a low-calorie diet and a twice-monthly three-month intensive regimen, he adds.

The unit's professor is currently enrolled in this weight management program under Dr. Oliveros' supervision. She studied at the St. Luke's Wedding gift certificate final given her. If you have a relative or friend suffering from obesity and its associated health problems, perhaps you can give their the precious gift of health.

1 National Nutrition and Health Survey (Mikhail: 2003-2004)

2 http://www.niddk.nih.gov/public.cdc/health/health_obes.htm

For feedback, please e-mail the Healthcare Technology and Outcomes Information Bureau at [illegible]

Helpful hints for healthy heart

WITH HEART DISEASE being the No. 1 killer in the Philippines, it's time we start living more conscious about our heart health.

Do you spread most of your time in the couch? Constantly fill up on chips and sugary sweets? Smile for a cigarette after a stressful morning? Since by knowing these bad habits and then take those tips to begin a new, more heart healthy lifestyle.

1 **Stop smoking.** Quitting smoking is the single most important thing a person can do to live longer. Smokers are twice as likely to have a heart attack than a nonsmoker.

2 **Consume less salt.** Many people are surprised to find out that the amount of salt they consume every day could be putting their health at risk. Too much salt can cause high blood pressure, which increases the risk of developing coronary heart disease. Adults should consume less than 6 grams of salt a day. Checking food labels for nutritional information can help you choose healthier options.

3 **Balance your diet.** Try having a balanced diet, containing plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, oily fish and starchy foods such as whole-grain bread and pasta. This becomes specially important after the holiday season when consumption of unhealthy food and alcohol spikes alarmingly. A healthy diet can help reduce the risk of developing heart disease, and can also help increase the chances of survival after a heart attack.

4 **Exercise for your heart.** Because the heart is a muscle, it needs exercise to pump blood efficiently around your body. To ensure you get enough exercise, you should aim for 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise a day. If this seems too daunting, start off gently and build up gradually.

5 **Drink low-fat milk.** A 25-year-long study, involving men in Scotland between the ages 35 and 64, found that death from heart disease was 8 percent higher among men who drank less milk. But it is important to watch what milk you drink because milk fat is one of the largest sources of saturated fat in adults' diets. Ensure with fiber, for instance, has low cholesterol, low sodium, low saturated fat and no trans-fat. It also has a unique heart defense system to help prevent cholesterol buildup and help control blood pressure. It's also rich in fiber and antioxidants to help keep the heart protected.

32% of gov't employees suffered mental health problem once, 2006 study says

By Tess R. Salazar

AROUND 32 PERCENT OF GOVERNMENT employee respondents had experienced mental health problems at least once, 15 percent had specific phobias, 13 percent were alcoholics, and 7 percent suffered from depression. These are findings of a 2006 pilot study done by the Department of Health's National Epidemiological Center on several government agencies at the National Capital Region.

The study involved employees from the 20 national agencies in Metro Manila.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III revealed the data during a speech before the First Mental Health Summit on April 25.

Psychiatrist Dr. Eduardo Tolentino narrowed, however, that the data were "based only on a pilot study of only over 2000 subjects," and that a nationwide study would have to follow this year as soon as the funds are ready.

Pressure-mental health

Duque said part of DOH's goals is to prevent mental health in the general population, to reduce the risks and prevalence of mental disorders, and improve the quality of life of those who are affected. "There are lofty goals but crafted in realistic proportions," he said.

Using the department's recently completed mental health assessment system based on the World Health Organization-Assessment Instrument for Mental Health System, Duque revealed that 5 percent of health care expenditures by the 2020 (or an estimated P484 million) are directed toward mental health.

Mental health facilities

He added that 9% percent of these are spent on the operations of mental health facilities.

The national center for Mental Health in NCR, which has around 4,200 beds, currently serves as the main referral unit for mental illnesses in the country.

There are seven psychiatric units in seven DOH-retained hospitals in NCR and psychiatric in-patient required facilities in 18 of the 17 regions.

Those DOH facilities are complemented by other government facilities with mental health units which are able to provide a wide range of services including acute to long-term in-patient care, crisis stabilization care and specialized care for children, adolescents and the elderly.

"However, there are no district in-patient facilities in the country and there are also few community mental health services available for out-patients. And this is where we intend to focus on: that we can make mental health services more accessible to patients at the community level."

Generics medicine to benefit 32.9-M Filipinos living in poverty

RECENT DATA RELEASED BY the National Statistics Office and the National Statistical Coordination Board have revealed that 32.9 million out of the 88.5 million population are poor, or 39 percent of Filipinos are at present living in poverty. The alarming figure refers to individuals who are not earning enough to maintain a decent standard of living and are hence, struggling to make ends meet.

With poverty incidence growing in spite of the supposedly improving economy, more Filipinos are still beset with daily struggles for survival amid rising oil, rice and commodity prices, higher unemployment and the global food crisis. The spiraling cost of daily living is creating a detrimental effect on the budget of families, one only among the poor but even the middle class sectors.

Each Filipino unit within the household are likewise affecting the allotment for various basic needs, among them health care, which leads to more incidences of illness and disease. Ideally, Filipino families are believed to allocate about 40 percent of their budget for the purchase of medicines—a significant figure that the poor population usually will sacrifice to afford food and other essential needs.

Proper healthcare

Fortunately, a chain of drug stores offering generic medicine is working on intensifying the basic right of every Filipino to proper healthcare through affordable medicines. The Generics Pharmacy was established to provide access to quality yet affordable medicines for every Filipino. The company is currently pioneering generic medicines—the active ingredient and scheduled pharmaceutical product having the same active ingredients, same dosage form and same strength as the branded medicine.

According to The Generics Pharmacy president Jacqueline Liason, generic medicines are as efficient as brand-name drugs and should be promoted more to the buying public which has always relied on branded products. This trend continues even if the medicines sold in the Philippines are pegged to be as much as 100 percent higher compared to other Asian countries.

Convenience

"The law requires generics drugs to have the same quality strength, purity and stability as their branded variants, but for a fraction of the latter's price. This is why we are committed in promoting better health among Filipinos by making affordable quality medicines available to all," Liason said.

He added that their company has been engaged in the pharmaceutical industry since 1969 by importing and wholesaling pharmaceutical products, but decided to pursue the retail trade in 2005 to reach more communities who rarely can afford the medicines sold in the market. Last year, it became the first generics retail pharmacy to franchise in the Philippines, and is the group's fifth hotel retail-public store.

With 85 stores currently catering to millions of Filipinos, The Generics Pharmacy sells some 150 generic medicines that represents 85 percent of the common medicines bought by Filipinos, including drugs for high blood, cholesterol, diabetes, colds, asthma and antibiotics, along with vitamins and food supplements.

Lower price

"Just because a drug is priced significantly lower does not mean that it has poor quality or is lower in efficacy. Generic medicines use the same active ingredients and are shown to work the same way on the body, and produce similar benefits as their brand-name counterparts. We have been selling generic drugs since 1989 and if they didn't work, we would have been out of business a long time ago. The fact that stores and more people are buying generic drugs only means that they work," Liason added.

In addition to the lower price of drugs, The Generics Pharmacy also provides other incentives to their buyers, such as 20 percent discount for senior citizens, free delivery within Metro Manila, and cash less medical consultations at selected branches. The Generics Pharmacy outlets are strategically located all over Manila and in key cities nationwide to serve millions of Filipinos who do not have access to affordable medicines.

Health benefits of thermal baths

By Rafael R. Castillo

BUDAPEST'S WORD IS DIVIDED by the River Duna into two parts: Buda and Pest, impressive visitors as a modern Hungarian city with numerous sights, but the real magnificent charm is in the richness of architectural styles of its old buildings is also fascinating. One finds buildings with neo-gothic facade, big Parliament and Hungarian layout.

Aside from its architectural treasures, another tourist attraction in Budapest are the thermal baths, much bigger than the ones we have in Los Baños in Laguna. They are found right in the heart of the city and the local residents believe, as the ancient Romans did, that regularly bathing in these pools confers a lot of health benefits. This practice is already an ingrained part of the Hungarian culture. Visitors from nearby countries in Europe come regularly to have their hydrotherapy in the thermal baths.

Truly soothing, relaxing

The Romans built several of these thermal baths, some of which are now in ruins, such as the Turkish baths in Budapest. The baths survey their water from natural thermal and mineral water deep in the ground.

Indeed, immersing oneself in the baths can be a truly soothing and relaxing experience. One can feel one's self-stimulus, released by pressures of daily work, relax. Tense ligaments also loosen up. Thermal baths have also been reported to help women with medical conditions including fibromatosis, circulatory problems, insomnia, bronchial asthma and hypocondriacal disorders. The list of reported health benefits is quite long making one suspect that it's too good to be true.

The results, however are more, per scientific studies of these purported benefits from thermal baths or spa. But I think no one will question the soothing relief that these water therapy in pain relief, pain mobility and relaxation.

Health hazards

Soaking or swimming in thermal baths however is not without hazards. The health hazards include those associated with swimming pools, especially if the water is not drained regularly from the pools. The warm, moisture containing, aerobic water is a perfect breeding ground for many organisms, such as legionella pneumophila, the cause of legionellosis (legionnaires' disease) and the Pontiac fever, the dermatomycoses, which causes pneumonias and skin abscesses.

Thermal hot spas may also contain a species of amoeba that can cause meningitis. One can also get infections of the ear (otitis externa), urinary tract, respiratory tract, eye and wounds from thermal baths and spas.

The high temperatures in some types of spas also exacerbate the effects of alcohol or drugs on the central nervous system, and can lead to accidents or spa.

Rich in natural elements

Natural thermal baths just like the ones we have in Los Baños, those water from deep in the ground which get well-stored through rock strata. The water is rich in natural elements such as calcium from limestone strata, magnesium from magnesite, iron from pyrites, fluoride and several other trace elements. Waters from volcanic sources may contain high concentrations of sodium and bicarbonates. This gives them a natural effervescence, as water bubbles from underneath the ground.

The water from these thermal baths is classified as either mineral or spring water. Its therapeutic claims are made on the spring water. Spring water may be either alkaline (pH above 7) or acidic. There waters, with some filtration and other simple means of purification, can actually be safe for drinking.

Our local tourism should perhaps invest in promoting the baths in Los Baños. Tourists in Los Baños, Batangas and Mountain Province should first make sure the water in these baths is regularly checked for microorganisms. We also must keep the baths to ease the necessity of being thermal disasters.

Vision loss treatment now more accessible

PEOPLE SUFFERING FROM age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a common eye disease that is the leading cause of blindness among the elderly, can now have easier access to the breakthrough treatment for wet AMD called bevacizumab.

Roche, a research-based pharmaceutical company, has partnered with Asian Eye Institute (AEI) and Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) to make Bevacizumab's more accessible and affordable to patients. Bevacizumab is the first and only FDA-approved drug treatment proven to gain and restore vision.

In two recent studies conducted to test the efficacy of the drug, patients experienced with Bevacizumab gained vision and the ability to do daily activities such as reading and shopping. Along with improvement in everyday functioning, AMD patients also experienced renewed sense of well-being, improving vision-related quality of life.

Partnership

According to Peter Ordonselmadi, president and chief executive officer of Novartis Healthcare Philippines Inc., the partnership will make it easier for AMD patients to avail of the breakthrough Bevacizumab treatment through buy-here medical repreviewer of AEI and affordable payment scheme from BPI. "Through the synergy of this partnership, AMD patients can hope for better quality of life," he said.

"This partnership allows more eyesight advance people above age discussion, particularly AMD, and instill in them the importance of prevention and getting clinically proven treatment," said Benjamin Libarios, president of AEI.

Under the partnership, BPI cardholders may avail of Bevacizumab at the Asian Eye Institute under BPI's medical payment interest special installment plan (MPI). This deferred payment scheme enables patients to pay for their treatment in flexible monthly terms of 3 and 6 months at no finance or bail charges. The affordable payment scheme will be offered from March 1 to May 31.

Until recently treatments for wet AMD only slowed down the loss of vision. Now, Bevacizumab is available to improve and maintain vision and restore quality of life.

Leading cause of vision loss

According to the World Health Organization, AMD is now the leading cause of severe vision loss in people over 50 years old in industrialized countries. It is more likely to cause loss of vision than glaucoma, cataract, or diabetic retinopathy. To date, an estimated 23 in 30 million people worldwide are affected by AMD.

AMD gradually destroys the macula in the retina that is responsible for the "straight ahead" central vision necessary for clear, sharp vision during everyday activities like reading, driving and sewing. Symptoms include distortion of objects and lines (metamorphopsia), blurring and reduced visual acuity, decreased color vision, increased glare sensitivity resulting from sensitivity to changing light conditions, and the development of scotoma or blind spot in the center of a visual field surrounded by a distorted image. There are two types of AMD: dry AMD, where the retinal tissue gradually thins and the center slowly becomes blind; and wet AMD, where there is abnormality in the blood vessels under the retina, causing fluid and blood leaks that ruin cause immediate blindness. While dry AMD is most common, accounting for up to approximately 85 percent of all AMD cases, wet AMD accounts for the majority of severe loss.

To know more about AMD and Bevacizumab, send text message to 8917.4110911 using this system: AMD, name inquiry, contact number. Call Asian Eye Institute Marketing Department at 632 8982732 for more information. Visit the BPI Web at bpi.com.ph for additional info for Bevacizumab installment.

FROM LEFT are MSD group product manager Joy de Giorgio, PDH vice president Dr. Georgina Pantaleon, MSD managing director Chris Tan, PDH president Dr. Arnulfo Pelico, PDH secretary Dr. Donna Maria Serrano and MSD business unit director Arnold Bulfada during the signing of the memorandum of agreement between MSD and PDH on the development of the ProHair website www.prohair.com.ph.

Treating hair loss not a do-it-yourself project

MALE PATTERN HAIR LOSS (MPHL) is a problem that is familiar to many men. Gradual thinning of hair, receding hairline and appearance of bald spots are just some of the symptoms of MPHL. MPHL is a medical condition and, in certain cases, it can be prevented from further progression given the right treatment. If you're a man who is seeing more of the scalp than usual like, you are not alone.

Recently, ProHair launched a hair loss awareness program to support Filipino men suffering from MPHL. During the launch, hair specialists Doctors Rina Mallare and Jun Bermare talked about MPHL and the need for its proper diagnosis and treatment.

ProHair website

Another highlight of the event was the presentation of the ProHair website. Led by Philippine Dermatological Society president Dr. Arnulfo Pelico, the ProHair website at www.prohair.com.ph was revealed as a virtual link between men with MPHL and information about MPHL and its treatment. In close cooperation with the Philippine Dermatological Society, ProHair's website is aimed at providing local support to those seeking professional treatment for MPHL.

As with any medical condition, early detection, proper diagnosis and treatment may help stop hair loss. Treating hair loss isn't a do-it-yourself project. MPHL is a medical condition that requires professional attention. Consult your dermatologist about MPHL. Visit ProPHAIR at www.prohair.com.ph for more information.

MEDICAL FILES

super

Odd-venture

Interview with Super hero Masi Oka

by Wanggo Gallaga

page 01

Get high on lava

by Karla Vizcarra

page 01

One *Pinto* you have to open

by Katrina Holigores

page 02

JOURNEY WITH SUPER >>
Print: Pam Pastor
Co-Pilot: Katrina H. Holigores
First Officers: Tan Diaz, Jamie Gabella, Wanggo Gallaga, Juanita Magat, Paolo Pineda
Air Traffic Controller: Abet Guevara
Cabin Crew: Bobo Arevalo III, L.A. Morallos, Jen Sagayno
Ground Control: Sherwin Ayco
& Lito Lucero

Rustan's SUPERMARKET

In High Spirits

The Vineyard of Rustan's Supermarkets boasts of a wonderful selection of fine wines from around the world, over 70 red wines from France, Italy, Spain, USA, Chile, Australia and South Africa and more than 30 delicate white and rosé wines from France, Italy and the New World. Our wine cellars both at the wine shop and the warehouse are temperature-controlled 24 hours a day, 7 days a week so you're sure to get top-quality wines and spirits all the time. Either by the glass or by the bottle, our wines will keep you in high spirits, only at Rustan's Supermarket

1) Saint Emilion (France)	P490.00
2) Cotes de Provence Rosé (France)	P335.00
3) Dealbi Estate Chardonnay (Australia)	P995.00
4) Vin de Pays d'Oc Chardonnay (France)	P235.00
5) Cotes du Rhone Selection (France)	P385.00
6) Duc Sparkling Wine (France)	P265.00
7) Vin de Pays d'Oc Cabernet Sauvignon (France)	P250.00

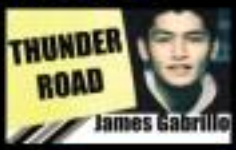
It's Gourmet Everyday at Rustan's Fresh

Makati | Shangri-La Plaza | Rockwell | Gateway | San Antonio | Greenbelt Katipunan | Magallanes | Corinthian Hills | Banawe, Cebu | Ayala Center, Cebu

Where shopping for food is a pleasure

Beat box

Because pop matters, here are three neat albums you can end the summer with



Artist: Gnarls Barkley
Album: St. Elsewhere

IT WOULD BE FASCINATING to go on about how this debut CD by Gnarls Barkley is an incisive commentary on postmodern pop-culture overload, a sly pastiche of low and high, warning a clever and edifying wave the on contemporary ephemera.

But then that would be really pompous, wouldn't it? It is hard to say what the breakdown of medium and message is here, but you can almost hear the melody going on.

Here, state chosen moniker is an (already genius hedonistic/murder double entendre; the title of the record refers to a once beloved, now defunct television show; and song titles reference such disparate pop fluff as Gorgeous Gadget and Icing Pixie.

What the highly amusing team of mash-up master Danger Mouse and rapper Cee Lo manage here essentially is to cue from pomp-hop masters like Outkast and Gorillaz (who cued from Run DMC, Peter Gabriel and De La Soul), creating a truly brilliant, irreverent contemporary opera of sorts, where ideas are conveyed through the tone of the music as much as the words.

Much of it is really classic fuck-you! turned inside out and sideways back, but there's a curiously straightlaced cover of the Violent Femmes' "Gone Daddy Gone," and they even manage some effective plunges into industrial electro.

Should one be inclined, however, to mistake this for an exercise in pure meaninglessness, lyrics like "Everybody is somebody / But nobody wants to be themselves" and "I could go on like this and on / Spin webs every?" reveal the existential voice turned beneath.

Artist: The Twilight Singers
Album: Powder Burns

Growing up is not very rock. Or soul, for that matter.

While many an acclaimed artist has burned out while attempting to mature, it's clear members of drama who manage to actually innovate with age. Leonard Cohen, Tom Waits, Neil Young, Kris Kristofferson, and Johnny Cash all managed to expand their creative legacies (and grow exponentially cooler) as they left youth behind.

It's a little early to throw him in with those greasy old-timers, but please consider adding Greg Dulli to that list.

While many of his grunge/post-grunge contemporaries have proved one-trick-ponies — or left the musical collaborator-Dulli has continued to evolve as a songwriter, a singer, and a raconteur.

"Powder Burns," the fourth album from his occasional collective, "The Twilight Singers," offers a simultaneously rough and tender body of songs that marks a career high.

Do "Three's Blues an accident," he sings, "I'm alive, it took me by surprise"? Given his admitted predilections for nightlife excess, he ain't the only one. But rather than just count on the luxury of his reputation, he pounces on "Powder Burns" is that of a guy who's actually glad he's still standing.

And evolving fears, the swagger of "I'm Ready" or the menacing "My Time Has Come" evoke that driving tension-amid-muscle-car-speeding-down-a-highway-at-three-a.m. feeling. But the lyrics on those songs and the rest of the album center on love, and even personal accountability.

"He set grown up, ya hear?" (will) sings on "Dead to Rights." And in this case, that's a ring to celebrate.

Artist: The

Artist: Massive Attack
Album: Collected

Since their emergence in 1990, Massive Attack has been a revolving door for collaborators. At the group's core is the recurring triumvirate of Robert "3D" Del Naja, Grant "Daddy G" Marshall, and Andrew "Mushroom" Vowles, who have, in successive or another, worked with, in points, and recorded.

And to this, add the likes of high-profile producers with various levels of involvement, such as Nellee Hooper, Cameron McVey, Jonny Dollar, and Neil Davidge, and the inimitable Massive Attack sound has remained elusive and evasive—the shivering bass makes your teeth chatter and your spine freeze, respectively, suspended beats thump in time with your beating heart, and the vocals (no matter who provides them) are as seductive as they are disarming.

Without peers since the release of their first single, "Unfinished Sympathy," Massive Attack have more than enough material for "Collected," their so-called "best of" double-disc compilation.

Culled from four full-length albums, "Blue Lines," "Protection," "Mezzanine," and "100th Window," and the soundtracks from "Danny the Dog" and "Bullet Boy," plus numerous rarities and unreleased songs, "Collected" includes a bonus DVD that features every pretty much-breaking video the band has made. Additionally there is a fresh track, "Live with Me," with vocals by Terry Callier, that sounds as orchestrated downtempo as anything the band has done in the past.

It's not often that you can honestly say that a band's entire catalogue, without feeling dated and a little embarrassed—what sounds silly to you now had a profound effect on you when it was first released.

But not with "Collected." If anything, this compilation only reminds Massive Attack's formidable ability to create songs that matter forever.

SATURDAY, MAY 31, 2008

In Bed with a Merman

He could have been a lawyer but he has chosen to invade your television and movie screens instead

By Ruby de Vera
Photos by JR Lojera

WITH THE HIGH standards that society now has for actors, physical beauty is not enough. They have to have the scoring power over their competitors, otherwise the fare will only last them a few good years before more good-looking newcomers steal the spotlight. The Filipino audience is more discerning and demanding these days—a new breed of actors are at the top of the crop, all of them good-looking, well-rounded and smart.

Alfredo Paolo Vergara III, or simply Alfred Vargas as he's known to the rest of the country, is one of the hottest actors in show business today. As one of the few in the industry who actually finished school, he's armed with a degree in Management Economics from Ateneo de Manila.

Freckled about the nose and cheeks, he confesses that he acts

HE SWIMS with mermaids

INSIDE >

NEW
OROCAN
Royale
Finally, a bigger and better innovation in closet organization.
• FREE Mirror & Hangers
• Two Chrome Locks and Keys
• Vertical Tubular Support
• Adjustable Shelf Divider
• Bigger & More Spacious Drawers
• Also available in green, pink & dark cedar

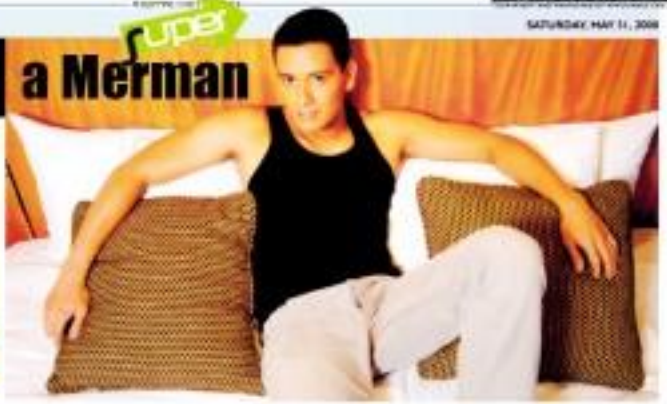
Why choose a Mac?

Come and ask about our free demo
and find out why the Mac is the only computer you will ever need.
Visit us from May 31 to June 1 to discover the incredible power of the Mac.

Participating Authorized Resellers: Manila:
Cebu:
Davao:

Authorized Reseller

In Bed with a Merman



ALFRED Vargas relaxes at the Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila

Homepage 05

ally liked the subject so much. He would have gone on to live naked if acting hadn't got in the way. Mr. Alfred Vargas III would have stranded gone, but fate had something different in store for him.

He entered show biz in 2002, when a talent scout saw him in a play and eventually auditioned for Star Circle. In 2004, he moved to GMA 7 where he's under contract at present.

Acting has always been a major passion for Alfred, who was a member of the Tanghalang Ateneo for three years. He had played roles in a staging of Shakespeare's classic "The Twelfth Night," among other treasured stint. He said he loved doing Shakespearean plays, iambic pentameters and all. Playing a classic role demands more an actor—there is a public recognition, and all actors should try doing it or any point in their lives. He admits doing theatre for the discipline it requires, and have actually done "Mommy Gucci," a famous Philippine folklore.

As a child he had a lot of dreams, but found that he's destined to be in something that communicates to the people. The manner of acting, he says, is communicating every emotion the actor has to the viewers, consequently bringing enjoyment for them—a kind of personal public service. For him, the greatest reward of being in show biz is making people happy.

The other kind of business

Using his hard-earned celebrity, Alfred has put up two businesses on the side. The earlier with other people from show biz, he owns a Barber Bar in Tomas Morato, Quezon City. He said he usually goes there to relax after a long day, or just hang out with his friends.

Another business venture is Red Devil's Barbecue, a barbecue place in Cainta. This one is a more personal thing, since his partner is also his best friend. He did all the processing of the necessary papers, and also the marketing and expansion for the business. He leaves the day-to-day operations to his best friend/partner.

In the future he's also planning to put up an agricultural company, saying that he had always been confortable with nature preferring up to Sta. Maria, Bulacan. Alfred (the farmer—who would have thought?

Keeping fit

In spite of his heavy schedule (he tapes for shows 5 times a week), he still manages to squeeze in gym time. He goes to Oz Fitness Center in Ilora Avenue Village in Quezon City, very convenient for him since it's just near his home.

His favorite sport would be basketball. Recently he visited Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain together with other GMA stars and ex-PBA players for a series of exhibition games. He also plays tennis and golf. It schedule permits.

Art as craft

Currently, he plans the role of a samurai named Ieyasu in the top-rating "Dyesebel," together with Marian Rivera and Dingdong Dantes. He also does the equally top-rating gag show Wais Ito Entertainment, exchanging roles and banter with various comedians such as Jose de Leon and more are on roll.

Asked whether he gets confused with all the hectic schedules and different acting requirements,

"I know I can do more, and I can prove a lot more ... I consider myself a versatile actor," he said. He loves doing both drama and comedy, and never fails to pick up a few tips from the more seasoned actors he works with. His training in theatre was a very good foundation for his chosen craft. Characters are turned on and off at the front of "Action!" and "Cut!" respectively.

With movies such as "Bridal Shower," "Zsa Zsa Zaturnnah" and "ELF" under his belt, Alfred has shown incredibly to the projects that he chooses to do. Alfred's passion for acting combined with his desire to further himself in his chosen craft is what sets him apart, because he knows that real talent is something that will never go out of fashion in a world as fickle as show business.

A business card *and* an office email address? I must be going places!

Better not let anything get in my way. Especially not a preventable disease like cervical cancer.

Cervical cancer is the second highest killer cancer of women in the Philippines.[1] Regardless of age or lifestyle, virtually every woman is at risk of Human Papillomavirus (HPV),[2-4] the virus that causes cervical cancer.[5] But women can protect themselves through screening and vaccination. Screening allows for early detection of precancerous lesions,[6] while an HPV vaccine with AS04 adjuvant can help protect against HPV 16 & 18, the virus types that account for 71% of cervical cancer cases worldwide.[7]

Ask your doctor about cervical cancer prevention today.

CERVAX 7M0608

super

ART WALK
WITH CARLOS CELDRAN

Reel Thrills!
Get the reward that's right for you!
BPI EXPRESS CREDIT
Chocolate CLOTHING COMPANY
Get P300 discount on your next visit*
for a minimum single receipt of P3,000

Masi Oka Gets Smart

Masi Oka doesn't get to use his comedic skills too often in 'Heroes' but uses it in spades in the upcoming spy comedy 'Get Smart.' He talks to Super about working with Steve Carrell and making the jump from the boob tube to the silver screen

By Maggie Gallego

BEFORE HE COULD bend space and time in the hit series "Heroes," Masi Oka was a regular improvisational comedian in Second City, The Groundlings, Theatresports, and ImprovOlympics. He even played characters on prank and gag shows like Punk'd, Reno 911!, and the Jamie Kennedy Experiment. Those skills are put to the test in the movie "Get Smart" where he joins the cast that includes Steve Carrell, Anne Hathaway, Dwayne Johnson, Terence Stamp and Oscar winner Alan Arkin.

"Get Smart" is an action comedy that was an iconic television series in the 60s. It's James Bond but with an irreverent sense of humor from beginning to end. "Get Smart" is about CHAOS, agent Maxwell Smart (who must destroy the evil forces of KAOS so they make an offer more for world domination. Unfortunately for Smart, it's for free relations.

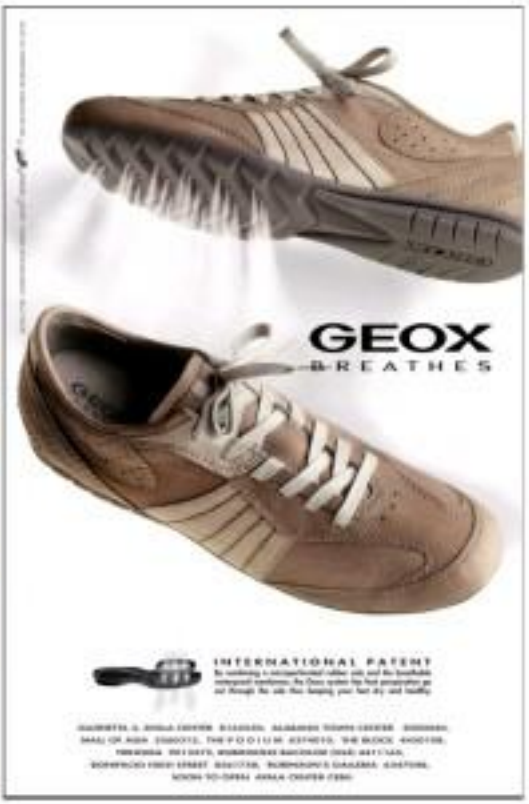
Oka plays Bruce, an engineering genius who along with Lloyd (played by Terence Stamp) provides the agents of CONTROL with their hi-tech gadgets. Oka says about his character, "They've the gadget guys, like Q to Bond."

Oka, who is not only an accomplished actor, but is also an accomplished visual artist and resides for Industrial Light and Magic and has worked on the special effects of such films as "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," "Star Wars Episode I, II and III," "Hulk," and quite a few more. With the success of "Heroes," Oka doesn't get to work as often as a visual artist. "I am in the employment database but I don't get as much as I used to," he says. But given the choice, he loves doing both. "I love using both parts of my brain."

Masi Oka talks to Super about working on "Get Smart".

You've done a lot of improvisational comedy. How's your brake-

READ ON D2



FAITH IS POWER

Piggy Bank Travels

Artful Escape in Antipolo

Text and photos by Katrina R. Hodgson

FIND YOUR SPACE Every bit of the pinto art gallery is conducive to some reflection or rest.

INSTEAD OF BRUSHING A SUBWAY channel surfing and surfing your face with junk food [your one, you will regret it come Monday], it was be time to get out of the metropolis and take a drive up to Antipolo to check out the Pinto Art Gallery. Having rocked the chips and the dip in the pantry, I was whisked away into adventure and welcomed with relatively traffic free roads overlooking the hills and lush greenery. Coming, I had heard about this place from friends many times before, that it was a weekend retreat originally and had eventually been turned into a hotspot for exhibits and gatherings for the cultured kind. The coolest thing about Pinto Art Gallery is that the entire place is one huge exhibit hall. You get to see paintings on one floor, installations in the garden, furniture in the restaurant, textiles draped in another room etc. The most exciting bit (at least to my opinion) is that visitors are free to move around at will, own the entire property and enjoy the fresh air and the multi-space spaces that have pockets of art ready to pop out and greet them. If you get tired, there's actually a bed right smack in the garden (yes, the couch pictured it), you might get surprised if you were a little spirited enlightenment, you can go into the chapel, or if you want some meditation time you can go and enjoy some quiet moments overlooking an almost endless expanse of trees. For those feeling the need to express themselves, there is a mini-amphitheater located next a quiet house, a fitting area that can probably be used for poetry readings or impromptu theater performances.

Art all around

On the Sunday of my visit, an exhibit entitled Avanzi had just opened. I saw handmade furniture, pottery pieces and basket weaves. Sharing my visit with Dr. Canning who warmly welcomed guests and personally tried to show them around whenever he could. As I viewed some paintings on the elevated floor of Gallery One, I could see a steady stream of art lovers come in and wander around freely, some were first timers such as me and I could hear sounds of delight as they took everything in. There were regular visitors of course who showed first timers around, or family visiting from abroad. "I never knew something like this existed here" was commonly heard by various visitors throughout the afternoon. Since it was the first day of the month-long exhibit (the Pinto Gallery is celebrating the Antipolo Art Festival till the end of June) summer, da was served in the form of bario-styled empanada. Crumbly bangka oil and dirty ice cream. Not quite sure if the food is a regular menu experience but it certainly made

DOCTOR DOES IT Dr. Canning welcoming guests to his home

NO SPACE to waste; expression is encouraged at once.

Masi Oka Gets Sm

HOPE IS POWER

POND-ER are you look into being with nature

E THERE AND EVERYWHERE Art can be born wherever you look

...ay were vulnerable. Families brought ... kids who happily ran around the gar... and if the weather was better I'm pretty ... life. Dasmeng would have encouraged ... to keep into the pool. Before I left I ... asked the good doctor if he could rate ... the place for a weekend stay (perfect ... group of friends or even a family week... short distance out of town escape). ... yet," he smiled although perhaps to

L' Arc En Ciel
Mounts Exhibit at Enterprise Center

23 May 2008 - L' Arc En Ciel Art Gallery invites art aficionados to a 4-person exhibit at the Art Hall of the Enterprise Center in Makati from June 2 to 14, 2008.

Expected to draw crowds of art patrons and awaken the artistic side of students and professionals alike are the works of art of four artists (left to right) - Rong Ganovilla, Maria Estonisel, Carla Kim and Ruth Santiago. Entitled "Breakthrough," the exquisite display is the second half of a series of exhibits that captures in canvass the imagination and triumphs of the featured artists.

L' Arc En Ciel, a French phrase that means "Arc in the Sky" is the haven for an atelier composed of seasoned artists, doctors, entrepreneurs, teachers, and students, who converge on a regular basis to hone their artistic skills and express their passion for art.

For more information about "Breakthrough," readers may contact Elaine Herbosa of L'Arc En Ciel at (0917) 895-1219 or email acherbosa@zpdsl.net.

...keep it a necessary for both himself and art lovers: it may be a not "own." Still, that one Sunday afternoon was more than enough for me to plan a trip back there whenever I need an artful escape.

Pinto Art Gallery is a member of the Ayala Foundation for Culture and the Arts. Gallery hours are from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., from Wednesday to Sunday. It is located at 3 Arts Made St., Greenhills, Ortigas City. Read. For inquiries log on to the gallery website at www.pinto...

...art

From page D1

...my mind clear and look and just approach it, like how I would approach any comedic film, and take it from there. Once I got the job, I didn't worry that we change. If I watched the old series, I would be influenced by how it style. I didn't want it to affect my acting.

How are you finding the transition from television to film?

It's really different. There are a lot of pros and cons for both. Film takes a long time, and there's a lot of time and leisure to play and develop a character. There is a lot of rehearsing. Television is done all fast, fast, get it done. At the same time, you get to see your work three months later. Once you're done, there's always new work. You can keep on doing it and keep turning things up. In film, you do not, you don't see something for three months and you wait for a year or maybe three years and it hasn't come out. You sometimes forget what it is you marked on as doing.

How do you manage to juggle being a mixed artist for ELM and being an actor and do you feel that either John interfere with each other?

I don't think it interferes. I think being a visual artist really helped me appreciate what goes on behind the scene. Most of the directors tend to shy away from visual effects because they don't know what it is. Most of the time, if there's special effects stuff, the director of Special Effects (SFX) comes in and the director goes, "Do you want? Do you magic?" Since I understand how it all works, I can talk to the SFX and find out ways to help them and understand how they want to construct the shot. I know where to go and where to stand and how to read and how to technically act to help them out for the post-production.

Would you say there are many roles available for Asians in Hollywood now than before?

Without a doubt! And, also, the roles are getting a little more visible. There's definitely a change. There's definitely a lot more diversity. But at the same time, there are a lot more actors now on the rolls is still low.

"Live Stream" opens in theaters June 19.

LOVE IS POWER

24/7 SUPER Radar

By Janice Cuenca-Clavio and Xiel Juan

THE MONTH OF JUNE KICKS OFF WITH more activities of the annual French Spring in Manila, not to mention art exhibit openings and other events. Don't let the rains keep you in.

Put on your party clothes and *FEEL* the energy from a roomful of people all moving to the same groove. Tonight, head over to Alchemy's "Vapor" Room at 10 p.m. and be entranced by **Chemistry**, a party like no other featuring **DJ Pun**, with **Rainmaker**, **Xtinkly** and **Dad's Kitchen**, and **Igna Tuga**, one of the first female DJs in the Philippine club scene. And to add to the whole mind-trippy experience is **DJ Baby D** with her mind-blowing visuals. Find Alchemy near the corner of C-5 and Julia Vargas Avenue, Pasig City. Call 706-1305 for more information.

Try not to let your jaw drop when you *SEE* a 25-foot drawing of nude shirtless farmer the main wall of the gallery, along with ten more works of mixed media drawings on photographs by **BenCab**. The biannual festival continues, featuring and showcasing the is single artwork for the first time in his exhibit, Farmers' Images, at the Silverlens Gallery. BenCab himself speaks at the opening today in the festival "talk and drawing installation from 3 to 6 p.m. and the book launch of BenCab: Nude Drawings from 4 to 5 p.m. Visit Silverlens Gallery at 2/F 9501 Bldg. 2, 2328 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City, for further information, call 814-0844 or log on to www.silverlens.wordpress.com.

Would you like to *SMELL* the sweet aroma of a freshly printed page? Take a quick visit to the **Graphic Expo 2008** at the Philippine Trade Training Center in Pasay City for more information, call Flora de Morelia at 896-0809, 896-6607 or 899-9871, or e-mail flora@hcdc.com.ph.

EXPERIENCE the sweetest and whimsy of the French Spring indoors, safe from the rain, when it presents **Dinner Musicale** live on the stage of the Carlos P Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza at 8 p.m. on June 4. This is not your usual big top-type-event, no silly clowns or animals here, just John and Guillaume, a Chinese pole acrobat and a musician, exploring their own little space. Expect this to give you a natural high, because the space as you know it will be invented by the sights and sounds that would be brought to you. No more details on this and upcoming events such as the 911 the Movement and Bike Dinn (tip: hop!)Japonisme/Africa dinner group both on June 7, please contact Alliance Francaise 893-7883, 893-7441, or 895-7757 or log on to www.alliance.ph.

SEE the world through a **Camera in the Spectator** and find out what the Philippines looks like through the lenses of photographers Dida Arellano, Nissa Batanti, Neil Daza, Emmanuel De Guia, Tommy Hafalla, Pitoy Navarrosa, Elisa Osmeña, Raz Pelaez, Sonia Sicuia, Steve Tirona and VJ Hilabrenos. The exhibit opens as the same time with Contact Photography: Japan's Artists Today for the Philippines-Japan Friendship Month on June 5 and will run until July 25 at the 4/F South Wing, Museum of the Filipino People, Rizal Park, Ermita, Manila. For inquiries, call the National Museum of the Philippines at 527-1119 or The Japan Foundation, Manila at 811-6133 or log on to the www.jfmo.org.ph.

Up next *TASTE* the mouthwatering menus of the Old World along with wine lovers and connoisseurs at the ballroom of Mandarin Oriental Manila as **Bord'Wine**, a wine festival, on June 5 at 6 p.m. For ticket and information, call 750-8888, local 2832, or visit the Lobby Shop at the Mandarin Oriental Manila.

Attend a very special benefit art show/sale and *VIEW* an art collection spanning two decades in **Wyn Pilang Cline**, a collection of paintings by renowned Filipino artists from the 70s to the present on sales at 2/F S & L Building, 1308 Roxas Boulevard corner Remedios Salas, Ermita, Manila, from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Proceeds from this art exhibit/sale will be used in private support for people affected by cancer. Selected paintings and drawings by top Filipino artists including H.R. Ocampo, Leo Locsing, Romulo Olivio, Ferro Magpayo, and others will be available. Enjoy Magpayo and some of his friends will also debark on the spot. Contact the organizers of the benefit, Carroll Community at phone: 751-0241 or 815-1294, or e-mail to hi@carrollcommunity.org.

Information is subject to change without prior notice. For more information on events, log on to www.mag24-7.com or pick up your free copy of 24/7 Nocturnal Navigator at your favorite malls, bars and restaurants. You may also text 24/7 digs to 2855 for Globe and Sun and 2951 for Smart. Submit your schedules before Tuesday to events@mag24-7.com and mag24-7@gmail.com for inclusion in this column.

SEE BenCab

TASTE Rare Wine

SAMSUNG

Soul

Just like a window to your inner workings, the Samsung Soul navigates like a dream, almost intuitively. Touch screen window icons change according to shape of hand tune - from Music to FM Radio, to Camera, to Image Editor - at a magical touch, with Haptic feedback. A 5-Megapixel Camera with face detection and audio by Bang & Olufsen ICEpower rap off an enchanting mobile experience. Stream hundred of GB files of metallic coolness, this phone embodies the fun of style. With Samsung Soul, it's not that hard to imagine.

imagination unlimited

TOLL FREE 1-800-10SAMSUNG

THE POWER WILL BE YOURS ON JUNE 2

Mayon lava trek

Climb up to the newest high

By Kaela Vizcarra

THERE WE STOOD—A MOTley assemblage of writers, photographers, mountaineers, soldiers, medical teams, politicians and television folk—uneasy and sore, but manfully in awe. As the remaining members of our group staggered up the lava-covered boulders of Camp One's delicate slopes, the groans and grunts were hushed into silence, and exhaustion gave way to pure, unbridled exhilaration: We had just climbed a volcano so bewitching that the elders speak of two legends behind it—one borne of beauty, and the other of wrath.

Considered one of the most perfect and most dangerous volcanoes in the world, Mt. Mayon is hauntingly beautiful, even in slumber.

JR Alamaro, a shopping consultant from Legazpi and Philippine Everest team member, said not a lot of Filipinos climbed Mayon's famous peak. Unlike foreigners, Filipinos are rarely afraid of weather conditions, combined with the perpetual threat of an eruption. Mayon last spewed lava in 2006, and until now, huge chunks of lava lie unmoving next to lanar. Even as we climbed, Mayon was under Alert Level 1, although we were assured that an eruption was unlikely.

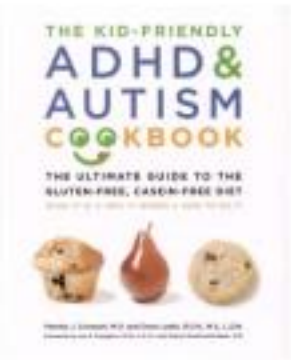
For Ricardo Ey, 56, known in Bicol as the father of Mayon, storms and explosions are at once, inconveniences. The spunky senior has been trailing the volcano since 1954 and had once climbed through an actual eruption. In all, he's reached Mayon's crater more than 600 times, and had carved out most of the trails that lead to the summit, including the one we took from Buyugan.

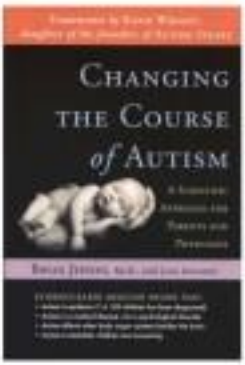
"The climb to Camp One is actually very easy," Legazpi councilor Carlo Clun told us as we stood wheezing, 5,742 feet away from the crater. "It's for kids."

Brief before any of us sedentary Manileños could protest, we remember that Daniel Vethencipa, 7, and Benjamin Ray, 12, had zoomed past us on the trek—beating us all out to the top. We also remember that the Father of Mayon's last eruptive climb was in 2002...when he was all of 70 years old.

REACH HIGH new heights

healthy Options Recommends





The Kid Friendly ADHD Cookbook is kid friendly ★★★★★

Best Cookbook yet! ★★★★★

Great book to have! ★★★★★

Complete and Complex ★★★★

Excellent book ★★★★★

Autism information people can understand ★★★★

Shangri-La Plaza · Ruston's Makati · Greenbelt · Powerplant Mall · Bonifacio High Street · Festival Supermall · Trillicena · Ayala Centre Cebu · SM Megamall · SM City North Edsa · SM Mall of Asia · SM City Manila · SM City Sta.Rosa · SM City Clark · SM City Pampanga · SM City Davao

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

Where to Stop Where to Go

Where to Stop Where to Go
Where to Stay
Where to Eat
Where to Shop
Where to Play
Where to Relax
Where to Work
Where to Learn
Where to Worship
Where to Get Help
Where to Get Around
Where to Get Away
Where to Get Married
Where to Get Buried
Where to Get Cremated
Where to Get Divorced
Where to Get Annulled
Where to Get Adopted
Where to Get Pregnant
Where to Get Abortion
Where to Get Contraception
Where to Get Sterilized
Where to Get Vasectomy
Where to Get Tubal Ligation
Where to Get Hysterectomy
Where to Get Mastectomy
Where to Get Prostatectomy
Where to Get Circumcision
Where to Get Tattoo
Where to Get Piercing
Where to Get Body Piercing
Where to Get Ear Piercing
Where to Get Nose Piercing
Where to Get Navel Piercing
Where to Get Tongue Piercing
Where to Get Eyebrow Piercing
Where to Get Lip Piercing
Where to Get Nipple Piercing
Where to Get Genital Piercing
Where to Get Scrotum Piercing
Where to Get Penis Piercing
Where to Get Vulva Piercing
Where to Get Clitoris Piercing
Where to Get Labia Piercing
Where to Get Anus Piercing
Where to Get Perineum Piercing
Where to Get Urethra Piercing
Where to Get Meatus Piercing
Where to Get Glans Piercing
Where to Get Frenulum Piercing
Where to Get Prepuce Piercing
Where to Get Foreskin Piercing
Where to Get Corona Piercing
Where to Get Shaft Piercing
Where to Get Base Piercing
Where to Get Root Piercing
Where to Get Pubic Piercing
Where to Get Mons Piercing
Where to Get Abdomen Piercing
Where to Get Navel Piercing
Where to Get Umbilicus Piercing
Where to Get Hypogastrium Piercing
Where to Get Inguinal Piercing
Where to Get Groin Piercing
Where to Get Thigh Piercing
Where to Get Leg Piercing
Where to Get Knee Piercing
Where to Get Patella Piercing
Where to Get Shin Piercing
Where to Get Calf Piercing
Where to Get Ankle Piercing
Where to Get Foot Piercing
Where to Get Toe Piercing
Where to Get Nail Piercing
Where to Get Fingernail Piercing
Where to Get Toenail Piercing
Where to Get Hand Piercing
Where to Get Finger Piercing
Where to Get Thumb Piercing
Where to Get Index Finger Piercing
Where to Get Middle Finger Piercing
Where to Get Ring Finger Piercing
Where to Get Little Finger Piercing
Where to Get Wrist Piercing
Where to Get Forearm Piercing
Where to Get Elbow Piercing
Where to Get Upper Arm Piercing
Where to Get Shoulder Piercing
Where to Get Axilla Piercing
Where to Get Armpit Piercing
Where to Get Chest Piercing
Where to Get Breast Piercing
Where to Get Nipple Piercing
Where to Get Areola Piercing
Where to Get Sternum Piercing
Where to Get Ribcage

Teaching the world to sing

ESTEEMED PERSONALITIES IN the realm of music become professors and teach the world to sing, dance, and perform in perfect harmony through Nokia Arts. Short for Artist Coming Together to Strive, Nokia Aces is a three-year partnership of Nokia and Rock Ed Philippines. Together, they will both help to discover how music can change the picture.

"Through Nokia Aces, we hope to make an impact in the lives of not only the children who will be part of this but also to their communities," says Williams Hamilton-Wispin, General Manager, Nokia Philippines. "We are glad to have partnered with Rock Ed Philippines who share the same passion to connecting people through music."

Working with Rock Ed Philippines, Nokia hopes to train 120 kids with music skills, offering them a chance to survive through distinction. Eventually Nokia hopes to grow the program to benefit some of 500 families or 2000 individuals. Globally Nokia hopes to commit $250,000 for the donation program. The seven children who will see here.

Initiatives in the Nokia Aces program come from foundations such as ChildHope Arts, Balay Tuluyan, and Volante Foundation.

Rock Ed's founder and executive director Gang Badoy offers that "the cooperation of Nokia Aces has allowed us to sustain Rock Ed's Project HA (Hohinoon Initiative for Artists) and make the music camps more regular."

School is Cool

The Nokia Aces program is broken up in to three stages. The first stage is when the children are taught to use a musical instrument, the second is when they rehearse as a band, and the third is polishing for performance. "The program is made in such a way that the kids are given the feeling that they are in a real music school. This lets them experience a form of discipline," shares Gang. "We even asked the journey do learn who live in their community to provide their jeep as the kids' school bus to take them to and from their homes."

The music camp modules will be conducted by music modules such as respected

GANG Badoy of Rock Ed with the kids of Nokia Aces

musicians Noel Cabangon, Francis de Veyra who will be instructor for keyboards and ukulele, Juan Miguel Lorenzo from the Music School of Boni Cavalejero, and Jay Gacusan of the UP College of Music. De Veyra, Lorenzo and Gacusan who are the three main instructors are part of the premiere Terno Recordings band called Radioactive Sago Project. "At present, there are 47 children who are taking up classes in guitar, keyboard, drums, and drums," Gang said. "We're glad that they have come so far and in three classes for themselves what they want to take up."

Beneficiaries can perform and expect a platform to showcase their art in the rest of the world through Nokia Events Public shows, MC concert, possible record labels, jamming with local bands and even as international Music Camp.

During the event, the students gave heart-warming performances. The musical class presented an energetic dance performance while the drums, keyboards, and guitar students formed bands, named Nokia Rockers Band A and Nokia Rockers Band B. Together, they performed Pinoy rock classics such as "Tadhana" and "Kisapmata" Edgar and a musical combination of "Terena" and "Only Reminds Me of You."

100 Kwentong Peyups

Tours, Leisure & Chow

Waterfront Hotels & Casinos' Top Accounts Appreciation Night

MAY 23 WAS A BELLETTER DAY FOR ALL of Waterfront Hotels and Casinos' Top Producers and Top Travel accounts for the year 2007. The Pacific Grand Ballroom was specially turnkey for the affair - bistro linens was in shades of blue and white, studio-colored cloths and colorful bunchings draped the ceiling, photos of the different Waterfront hotels flashed on the set that wrapped the entire ballroom, tropical fruits and flowers were tastefully arranged to serve as centerpieces, and the highlights of the evening were the regional specialties of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, as well as the highly captivating performances of stars of Diva, Oktos, who sang hits from Filipino cinema classics.

First place for WaterFront Cebu City Hotel and Casino's Top Producers for the year 2007 was awarded to eMerchantas Contact Center, a high-performance contact center and BPO company with its home base in the Philippines. The Top Travel Award for WCCHC went to Metro Express Tours Corporation, for generating the most travel groups for the year 2007. A special award was given to Tagged Events for being the number one

WATERFRONT Airport Hotel and Casino's GM Hermino and Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino's GM Marvin Pura are flanking Jacinto Park of Metrowin, Waterfront Airport Hotel and Casino's Top Travel Awardee for 2007.

concern producers, as well as to Ritchie Mendoza for social and corporate events.

First place for Waterfront Airport Hotel and Casino's Top Producer for the year 2007 was awarded to Jeppel Cebu Shipyard, the largest and most comprehensive ship care facility in central Philippines. The Top Travel Award for WAHC went to Club Four Seasons Ebene Travel for generating the most travel groups for the year 2007.

The Top Accounts Appreciation Dinner was Waterfront Hotels and Casinos' way of saluting each and every one of their business partners, especially those who have seen them through the good times and the bad. Waterfront celebrates another fruitful year that just started, with hopes of more happy returns in the year to come.

Waterfront Cebu City Hotel and Casino is located at Salinas Drive, Lahug Cebu City, Philippines. For inquiries and reservations, please contact (032)232-0888; reservations-local@wcc.local; food and beverage: 8304; front office: 8114. Waterfront Airport Hotel and Casino is located at P1 Airport Road, Lapu-Lapu City and can be reached through (032)340-4888.

UNWIND AT BELLEVUE'S 20/20 BAR

After a hectic day at work, invite your girlfriends to get together and party at the Bellevue's 20/20 bar. The hottest spot south of the Metro. Every Wednesday for the month of June, ladies could enjoy none-for-the-other while cooling down at bar's free featured drinks for the night. Every Tuesday, birthday celebrants of the month would surely get a long as they will be treated to a free cold and refillable pitcher of selected drinks. Celebrants would just need to present a valid ID indicating their birthday and they will get the featured drinks for the evening. Free of charge from 8 p.m. to 12 p.m. If that is not enough, the 20/20 bar gives you a reason to visit out and party daily with 50 percent off on its local beers, wines and spirits from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 771-4488.

Sushi-Ya dinner treat

TREAT YOURSELVES TO A YUMmy Tonkatsu/Tonkatsu (P100) or healthy California Maki (P110) this dinnertime at Sushi-Ya! Valid from 6 p.m. 10 closing, Mondays through Fridays. For take out orders. All prices are VAT inclusive and free of service charge. Available at Sushi-Ya Restaurant, Mall locations: Level 3, Robinsons Galleria and Tuna Gusto Asia, Finishmore, Plaza Manila.

Tropezz makes it to Tatler's Best Restaurants List

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO STAND OUT AMONG THE many, many restaurants opening from out of nowhere? Some are born out of hype, the personality of the owners, the foreign brand ... but only those that can give the best dining experience makes it right.

For those restaurants who qualify as the Holy Grails of gastronomy there is an unwritten selection criteria -- consistency of excellence, ideal comfort zone, and value for money.

At the truly great restaurants, you can bet point at a dish blindfolded and it is guaranteed to be mouth-watering. For a restaurant to reach dizzying heights, it has to make you feel like a king and yet so comfortable that you would want to go back again and again. The food and the experience should make the customer consider the amount well spent.

Tropezz is not a "fine dining" restaurant but an honest to goodness gone-to-see-gone-to-think kind of place where regulars get to know each other after several visits trying each other's favorites ... adobo linguini, steak sinigang, caviar de Bagac... each dish a signature dish in its own right. Even the Fries and Cheese Sandwich gives one a chocolate take.

Tropezz Bar in Greenbelt 3, Makati City has emerged, from the several list on the block in 2007, to one of the best. To be recognized in the upcoming Philippine Tatler's Best Restaurants of the Philippines, Tropezz has really made its mark.

Tropezz food is distinctively Asian-inspired. Chef Dorcas Villalobos, a proud Cordon Bleu and talented 32 year old Filipino chef, ensures the quality of the ingredients prepared in a consistently high standard. His creative mastering of flavors and cooking shows in the "personality" of the cuisine: a bit fun and unique but satisfyingly close to home.

The restaurant does not limit the food served as what is on the menu especially for events and special parties for a range of customers which include Manila's Finest. Rich have their wishes, and regulars, the discerning have their medium rare T-Bone steaks or the special made-to-order omelettes.

Tropezz is located at level 2, Greenbelt 3, Ayala malls Makati. For inquiries on what band is playing for the night you may call 757-6484 or 757-6485. For special parties, look for Mr Marcus Langit.

Cocoy's · Mang Lito · Tapa Republic · Chowking · Greenwich · Chinese Garden · Max's · Pancake House · Kenny Rogers Roasters · Jollibee · Pizza Hut · Yellow Cab · Figaro · Bo's Coffee · Museum Cafe · Tokyo Tokyo · Shakey's · Tim Ho Wan · Pancake House · Kenny Rogers Roasters · Jollibee · Pizza Hut · Yellow Cab · Figaro · Bo's Coffee · Museum Cafe · Tokyo Tokyo · Shakey's · Tim Ho Wan

IT WAS a cloudy day at Mt. Mayon

Mayon lava trek

From page E1

In truth, the risen lover reconnects with greens, rock and earth under a genuine bike ride to Mayon's Camp One—2, 500 feet above sea level—in nothing short of incredible. Upon reaching camp, any regrets cacophoned while swapping through the rudimentary winding arteries immediately dissipates—especially upon discovering the world's awesome-tasting water trickling down its patch slopes. Especially if a pot of native chicken boiled in green papaya magically from someone's pack.

Sunny Feldkircher, under Managing Director Glen Lopez, has partnered up with the province's local government bodies to promote Mt. Mayon, among the region's other natural yet often neglected wealth of resources for economics.

"It's been my personal conviction that our country's natural resources can help alleviate poverty," Lopez shared, speaking with the same resolve that has incontrollably made her media giant ABS-CBN's social and environmental conscience. "We've but some of the most spectacular natural wonders in the country, yet it remains one of the poorest regions. It's just a matter of making people understand that they should take care of their environments, for example, that dolphins are more valuable to them alive than dead."

The outstanding transformation of Sorsogon's Bicol into a self-sustaining, eco-tourism hub has become Sunny Feldkircher's working model for all ecotourism ventures. The small town, whose shores were with the friendly Sorsogenos or whale sharks every summer, operates whale-watching tours to propel revenue for P5,000 per boat—enough to feed a family of five for nearly a week. Donsol sees a 130 percent increase in tourist arrivals each season—so much in fact, that Karina Bautista, project manager for ecotourism in Region Five, says the town's 30 rooms could no longer accommodate the volume.

With the majestic Mt. Mayon proven accessible even to jelly-kneed non-mountaineers, Legazpi may turn begin in particular of Donsol's tourist surplus. The city has two other sanctuaries apart: the Lingbon Hill, which looks out to Mayon, and sidewalk in its belly a 1940's Japanese bunk turned for arms and ammunitions, and the Underwater Tunnel, which, also built by Japanese soldiers in hiding, hosts of history, hungry death and bat wings.

"There have been a lot of misconceptions about ecotourism. Some people think the product just needs to have something to do with nature. In fact, ecotourism must comply with world standards, which means that first, the environment must be protected and resources must not be degraded. Second, the visitors must be directly involved in the experience; it must be educational and participative. And third, it must be self-sustaining and community-based. It should benefit as many people in the community as possible," Bautista, who is mainly responsible for launching the ecotourism program in Donsol, explained. "Right now, Barney Feldkircher is working on making good ecotourism packages for Mt. Mayon and other areas in the region."

For LLE Mountaineers Jay-Ar Catarata and Stan Enriquez though, the equation is a help. Even during the Mayon climb, a public disregard for cleanliness was observed: candy wrappers and plastic bags littered the site, and the sheer number of people trampling through the trail seemed to do more damage than good.

"They must look into doing low-impact climbs," Catarata observed. "If rivers isn't noticed and disciplinary isn't emphasized, they will destroy Mt. Mayon, just like what happened to Mt. Apo."

The prospect is chilling, yet not unman-

KEEP climbing

RICARDO Bellosa (right), who has climbed the Mt. Mayon 488 times, with the youngest climber that day, 7-year-old Daniel Panchenga Jr and his mother Mavic

PAUSING for a photo

THE AUTHOR in a tunnel built by the Japanese during World War II.

ageable. Ecotourism must be sustainable and community-based, but it must also be economically viable. Without the latter, the former two will not be possible. Sunny Feldkircher's ecotourism model is a self-sustaining, eco-tourism hub has become Sunny Feldkircher's working model for all ecotourism ventures. The small town, whose shores were with the friendly Sorsogenos or whale sharks every summer, operates whale-watching tours to propel revenue for P5,000 per boat—enough to feed a family of five for nearly a week. Donsol sees a 130 percent increase in tourist arrivals each season—so much in fact, that Karina Bautista, project manager for ecotourism in Region Five, says the town's 30 rooms could no longer accommodate the volume.

With the majestic Mt. Mayon proven accessible even to jelly-kneed non-mountaineers, Legazpi may turn begin in particular of Donsol's tourist surplus. The city has two other sanctuaries apart: the Lingbon Hill, which looks out to Mayon, and sidewalk in its belly a 1940's Japanese bunk turned for arms and ammunitions, and the Underwater Tunnel, which, also built by Japanese soldiers in hiding, hosts of history, hungry death and bat wings.

"There have been a lot of misconceptions about ecotourism. Some people think the product just needs to have something to do with nature. In fact, ecotourism must comply with world standards, which means that first, the environment must be protected and resources must not be degraded. Second, the visitors must be directly involved in the experience; it must be educational and participative. And third, it must be self-sustaining and community-based. It should benefit as many people in the community as possible," Bautista, who is mainly responsible for launching the ecotourism program in Donsol, explained. "Right now, Barney Feldkircher is working on making good ecotourism packages for Mt. Mayon and other areas in the region."

For LLE Mountaineers Jay-Ar Catarata and Stan Enriquez though, the equation is a help. Even during the Mayon climb, a public disregard for cleanliness was observed: candy wrappers and plastic bags littered the site, and the sheer number of people trampling through the trail seemed to do more damage than good.

"They must look into doing low-impact climbs," Catarata observed. "If rivers isn't noticed and disciplinary isn't emphasized, they will destroy Mt. Mayon, just like what happened to Mt. Apo."

The prospect is chilling, yet not unman

CATTRALL, HEDON AND DAVIS. Life is by no means perfect—even in their fairy-tale-like stories.

NOW SHOWING

Sanitized 'Sex' marks return of feisty female foursome

By Rito P. Asilo

"Sex and the City"
D: Michael Patrick King
S: Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Kristin Davis, Cynthia Nixon and Jennifer Hudson

FOUR YEARS AFTER THEIR HAPPENing-after endings on the hush-hush, Carrie Bradshaw, Miranda Hobbes, Charlotte York and Samantha Jones unduly halt late pop-culture consciousness to Michael Patrick King's flabby big-screen makeover of the groundbreaking TV series.

This time, though, the ladies, while still clad in Dinky Minnie Rijkhoff stilettos and stylist Patricia Field's mind-blowing fashion choices, have more serious concerns in mind—yes, including the irrepressibly insatiable Samantha!

Carrie (played by Sarah Jessica Parker), now a best-selling author and contributing editor of Vogue, is looking forward to a life of wedded bliss with longtime, on-again, off-again beau, Mr. Big (Chris Noth). She may be older and more circumspect about her choices in life, but her fashion savvy, busy schedule and love life (pshh) remain just a cinderwrist call away.

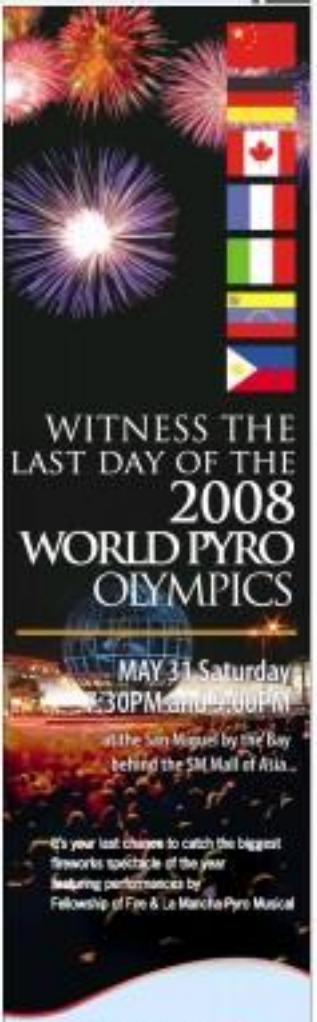
While curator Charlotte (Kristin Davis) leads an idyllic life in New York's Upper East Side with husband Harry (Evan Handler) and the doe-eyed little girl they adopted from China, Brooklyn-based lawyer, Miranda (Cynthia Nixon), is torn between forgiving her husband, Steve (David Eigenberg), after he confesses to a one-time act of infidelity, or breaking up with him. On the other side of the coast, publicist Samantha (Kim Cattrall) lives in a posh Malibu mansion with her boy-toy cum live-in lover, Smith Jerrod (Jason Lewis).

But, life is by no means perfect—even in Carrie, Charlotte and Sara's fairy tale-like stories. Charlotte silently dreams of having her own baby, while Sam is finding it increasingly difficult to control her sexual urges—especially with the relentless cougar.

Also "dangled" by the constantly shrinking script from start date: Gilles Marini.

And Xander Berkeley, despite the earnestness provided for by his adult, Enid Frick (Candice Bergen), and her super efficient assistant, Louise (Jennifer Hudson), let's just say that her trip to the altar isn't completely paved with roses...

Avid fans will cheer as King and the stylish quartet bring their irreverent, loopy humor to the big screen—at



Over 70 rat-borne diseases identified to date:
Would you risk the plague?

RATS carry many potentially life-threatening diseases such as Murine Typhus, Dysentery, Salmonella, Bubonic Plague and Rabies. A staggering 3.6 million rats are estimated to be born each day. Each one is a potential carrier or vector for one or more of the 70 known rat-borne diseases identified so far. They jeopardize our health and should be considered a serious threat.

But one more (RBE) is a bacterial disease caused by Streptobacillus Moniliformis and acquired through the bite or scratch of a rodent or the ingestion of food or water contaminated with rat feces. Small children are particularly likely to be bitten by rodents and are therefore more likely to contract rat bite fever. Symptoms include fever, chills, nausea and vomiting, headache, and pain in the back and joints. People with RBF are at risk of developing serious infections of the heart (endocarditis), the sac containing the heart (pericarditis), the coverings of the brain and spinal cord (meningitis), or lungs (pneumonia).

Protect your family and home with the Bayer Advanced Racumin Rodent Control System. Each Racumin product contains Coumatetralyl which slowly kills rats so that won't develop "bait aversion" or associate it with danger.

Use Racumin Tracking Powder, which is effective in bait and also doubles as a tracking powder to help identify where rats dwell. Deal with rats as well as rats with hands-free Racumin Ready-Bait Pak made from fragrant rice which entail feeding, rodent-bait accessible. And for utmost convenience, Racumin Paste in easy-to-use sachets can be placed wherever and whenever you suspect rat activities in your home.

Bayer Environmental Science

Hotline number 721-1800
Email: sales.support@bayerasia.com.ph

HAPPENINGS AT MOA

SM MALL OF ASIA
No Other Mall Comes Close

50-

SHALEY'S PETS — BY ROBERT MACNAUGHTON

A. LIPIN — BY JESS ABEDIN

FULCRUM — BY RAFLAND TATUNAY/ARLENE

PUSAO BABOY — BY PH JUNIOR

DIVINE COMEDY — BY STEVEN PABUSTAN

GARFIELD — BY JIM DAVIS

SALAPAW — BY DARWIN PEREZ

BABY BLUES — BY JERRY SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBBY — BY LIRA GARCELLANO

LOVEKNOTS — BY ELIZABETH CHEONGLO

KIKO MACHINE — BY MANOS ARRIETA

BEN — BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Hindu mystic
5 Hammering
8 Today's XTRO
13 Deeds
14 Assorted
15 Adult in adolescence
16 Abnormal inability to eat properly
18 Light musical composition
19 "If a woman cries?"
21 Is allowed to
22 Opec forsooth
24 Remains
25 Idea in energy
27 Term in sales
28 Elevator man?
30 Large ram
31 Ability to
33 Protein not an
35 Nicholas Hoult
36 Absent
37 Immovable
41 National
43 Crossbreeder
45 Fraud
46 Feature
48 Pleasure
50 Lowest
52 Very
54 Small rock
56 Roman Pluto
57 Ran off
59 Queensland
60 Lose supreme
61 Threatening
63 Lack of vitality
64 Amazing city
65 Craving nutty
66 Affected Swiss
67 Ignore
68 Monster

DOWN
1 Land between
2 Nile rodent
3 Almond tree bark
4 Tasting like
5 Deadly cells
6 Finishing
7 Inflame
8 Dumb-bunny
9 Bulky mammals
10 Assembling
11 Plant
12 Pastel action
13 Frozen dream
17 Bigotry
20 Discomfit a
23 Nectar
26 Protective vein
29 Pre-Lent
31 Medieval lover
32 Tore
37 Lawsuit
38 Ship
39 Pre-Raphaelite
40 Ignore
42 Ignore
44 Tolkien
47 Tolkien
49 Mongol tent
51 Type of shade
53 Fishing
55 Self-loving and
58 Flimsy large
62 Write music
64 Nation of
66 Short light
67 Ireland

By Mathew Higgins
Comicrelief.com

Today's Puzzle Solved

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DELMO

YOU BORN TODAY: Your quick, agile mind values education. You often attain so-called distinction. Many of you are excellent teachers, writers and communicators. You enjoy beauty in the arts and in nature around you. With your creativity, hard work and discipline will guarantee you success. You have an active mind and a keen sense of humor. Your lucky numbers are 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 27, 29, 31, 33, 35, 37, 39, 41, 43, 45, 47, 49, 51, 53, 55, 57, 59, 61, 63, 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77, 79, 81, 83, 85, 87, 89, 91, 93, 95, 97, 99. Your lucky days are Tuesday and Wednesday.

Birthdays of: Rod Stewart, poet; Barbara Mandrell, singer; Steven Seagal, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You can find new ways of working with others in your vision of optimal harmony. Think about this and make some positive changes.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Take today's challenges in stride. The Moon moves into your sign, making you more sensitive and intuitive. Strong interest in the arts, although you might feel others misunderstand you. Be patient, something special could be new ways of doing things.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You could encounter a powerful person today who can help you in your career. Make sensible decisions. Be open to receive, and you are the powerful person in someone else's life.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might encounter a powerful person today who can help you in your career. Make sensible decisions. Be open to receive, and you are the powerful person in someone else's life.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Your relationships with lovers, spouses and business partners are highlighted today. Someone is quite interested in you. Look for a good idea about how to build a better relationship. (Wise.)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You might meet someone today who can help you in your career. Be open to receive, and you are the powerful person in someone else's life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Look for ways to combine your talents with those of others. Especially things that you were good with someone else. You might get some help or information that you need.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Probably not a good day to attempt to improve your relationships today. Quite likely, it is best to do things alone with Libra son, you have to face the music.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be patient when dealing with children today. Be-cause of your impatience, you could be quiet with one child. People tend to be sad and react in an anything very seriously today.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Be patient when dealing with children today. Because of your impatience, you could be quiet with one child. People tend to be sad and react in an anything very seriously today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Someone with whom, especially romantic things, and relationships might get out of control. Be careful not to make rules. Don't use your skills to provide. Try a book with others.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You might meet with patience when dealing with a person who is quite impatient and unsympathetic today. Be aware that people can feel very insecure about practically anything today. Expect everyone to be!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SuDoKu — By Dave Green

							1	
3		8	5			7		
		2		3			6	
	4		7					
		7		6		4		
					4		2	
	9			8		3		
		5			7	8		4
	1							

Difficulty Level ★★★★

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.

Tips and programs at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	3	5	7	6	2	8	1	4
6	4	7	1	9	8	3	5	2
2	8	1	5	3	4	6	9	7
8	9	6	2	5	3	7	4	1
1	7	2	4	8	6	9	3	5
3	5	4	9	1	7	2	6	8
4	6	8	3	7	1	5	2	9
7	1	9	6	2	5	4	8	3
5	2	3	8	4	9	1	7	6

Diaz-Abaya's film institute assures bright future for Filipino movies

By Nestor U. Torre

THE FUTURE OF FILIPINO movies is secure and bright at the Marilou Diaz-Abaya Film Institute—that's the thought that clearly and forcefully arose in us when we recently visited the institute's stockpile campus and previewed three of its students and graduates' exceptional productions.

What impressed us most of all was the three movies' combination of significant material and technical production values. Many other student movies are strong in one and weak in the other, so it was particularly rewarding to watch these films that were uniformly outstanding.

Adelfa Alaba directorial debut.

To us, the standout quality of the student movies spoke volumes about the viability of the filmmaking vision that Diaz-Abaya shares with her students. Her standards may be rigorous, but her young filmmakers' results prove that they are eminently attainable.

The first film, "Opo, Ma'am," was a 12-minute documentary by Adelfa Alaba about a dolor (Marian Rivera) and her driver (Neil Sanconejo), and the clash of values that occurs when they are both confronted by the "problems" of a boy whom they found wounded and unconscious on a country road.

The storytelling was crisp, and the performances were intoned and absorbing. —All told, a fine albeit "small" cinematic achievement.

So, too, was the second short film, Dennis Marasigan's "Balikbayan Box," about another clash of values, this time involving a Filipino balikbayan box—a traditional homecoming offering—and his only daughter (Ina Feleo), who goes to culinary school to learn how to bake those modern confections.

Of course, the cakes are the objective correlatives of the main characters' generational and cultural conflicts—which are nicely resolved when the daughter realizes her father's real roles in her young life.

The third and most ambitious film we view was Ida Zeus's full-length feature, "Magic," which constituted the previous project's expanding on "Chain of Values" theme, with its dark and tormented drama about two musician brothers (Marc Abaya and Jonathan Sebastian) who react to their parents' tragic death in wildly different ways.

For the character played by Sebastian, Ida had in go on the Abaya's character, however, Ida had caused in he worth living. So, he proceeded to "kill" himself by resorting to emotion-deadening drugs and launching into a day-long piano-playing marathon that pushed his frail body—and mind—beyond endurance.

Huge problem

There, to add to the conflict's awesome tragedy, the brothers find themselves falling for the same woman (Mariah Lin Tinio)—who turns out to have a huge problem of her own.

In this version of dark and dangerous emotions, what illness of praise or happiness could those star-crossed young people possibly hope for? And yet, to its own way, the film's ending bears reminiscent of a kind of closure unique to itself, and to its tragedy-bounded characters.

All three films were exceptional, so Diaz-Abaya's institute is off to a flying start. We hope that similarly prodigious efforts will be expended to make sure that these superior movies won't be left to shine in beautiful seclusion, but will reach the greatest viewing public, so that many more people can be enlightened by them...and take heart in the bright future they presage for Philippine cinema and its hitherto poorly served audience.

"ELEGY." A dark and intertwined drama about two musician brothers who react to their parents' tragic death in wildly different ways.

VELVET AND OLIVE CARVING. Typical duo (2-minute short), "Opo, Ma'am."

Quintessentially . . .

From page F2

Girl Valencia's 'Some Enchanted Evening'

Award-winning singer-songwriter Girl Valencia performs at the Captain's Bar tonight in a solo concert, "Girl Valencia: Some Enchanted Evening."

The concert will be held at the Shangri-La's Oriental Hotel, Makati, at 9:30 p.m. Featured are harmonies plus sharp ballads and the energetic rock-'n'-roll band, Bended Knees.

Valencia is known for her mesmerizing medleys of well-loved standard songs, rare gems and pop ballads from the 1920s to the present.

Tickets are available at TicketWorld (891-9999), GV ticket sales (634-1751) and the Captain's Bar.

VDay tomorrow at RCBC

Catch a back-to-back performance of "A Blessing A Monologue: A Rant and A Prayer" and "The Vagina Monologues" at the RCBC Theater at 7 p.m. Cast includes Monique Wilson and Cherrie Gil. Call 896-3407.

Asah TV workshops

Sixty youths from Plan International's communities around the country are undergoing an advanced media-skills training programs conducted by Asah TV at the Subic Global center in Tipo-tipo.

Aged 13 to 17, the participants were selected from a series of summer workshops in digital photography, radio and video production. The workshops aim to empower children and give them a voice in media, using the theme, "Learn While and Play."

Trainers include TV director Lore Lluvallana, Rubyo ng Bayan's Alan Allanigue and Asah TV Inventory General, Meg Cruz Bernal.

Homefund graduation

At 4 p.m. today, Homefund holds the graduation rites of the 10-plus participants of its architect's 16-day film workshop. Its concern persons included Bidie Romero, Raymund Red, Ruel Reyes, Glen Alejar, Mark Molly, Mel Chionglo, Jose Navarro and Nelson Caligata.

Movies on TV

On Cinemax, tomorrow at 5 p.m., "What Planet Are You From?" June 2 at 9 a.m., "The Nutty Professor" June 3 at 8:30 a.m., "Around the World in 80 Days." June 4 at 3 p.m., "Lawrence of Arabia." June 5 at 3 p.m., "The Constant Gardener." June 6 at 7 a.m., "Amen."

On HBO, tomorrow at 1 p.m., "All the King's Men." June 2 at 11 a.m., "Memphis Belle." June 3 at 7 a.m., "The Good Shepherd." June 4 at 7 a.m., "National Lampoon's European Vacation." June 5 at 1 p.m., "Bridesmaids Nightie." June 6 at 3 p.m., "Planes, Trains & Automobiles."

Pie Ride at SM

Enjoy the Pie Ride now on a hip-hop tour of SM supermalls to promote his debut album, "Mali na Sayo Ang" June 1, Mall of Asia. June 2, North Edsa. June 3, Fairview.

VALENCIA. Sings at the Captain's Bar tonight.

FARRER. Flexes her thespic muscles in the film's dramatic moments.

Sanitized 'Sex' . . .

From page F1

almost two hours and 30 minutes! This time, however, there isn't much raunchy sex as there were in the show's standalone incantations, and the story's dramatic arcs allow Parker and Nixon to flex their thespic muscles. Yes, those saggy bits conventionally Mia Dia Film's narrative focus, but we're not used to seeing always manage to rein in such excesses.

Unsurprisingly, Parker and company's more mature concoctions have somehow dilluted the heady exuberance, witty humor and devil-may-care whimsy that characterized the TV series when it conquered the small screen in 1998 and throughout its six seasons.

Understandably, Carrie, Samantha, Miranda and Charlotte's personas have changed considerably after 12 years, but they have also evolved and metamorphosed beautifully.

King explains the gist of the movie more succinctly: "It's all about finding your happy ending." But, along the way, they happy endings—and ours—still always have exciting and surprising twists!

Rediscovering Fr. Larry Faraon

By Lilia Bartongan-Alvarez

HUMAN HABIG STORWEETHE bishops and the powers that be with his homilies laced with political undertones. He may have recently taken position on home issues (theologically look, though they don't seem to me). The oldest of Fr. Larry Faraon, OP, is keep them in kitchen during mass is enough to make them dog, even if his sermons speak the sometimes bitter truth about Christians in the church.

Make no mistake, Fr. Larry, a much sought-after homilist, retreat master and spiritual adviser to many celebrities, has a "maverick" side that didn't set human on sermons you don't often hear. His gift with words startles at the core of human frailties by using funny realities. If delivering homilies were an academic degree, he would be our candidate for summa cum laude!

Gospel account

For instance, while saying mass for a group of government employees, Fr. Larry explained a gospel account in which Jesus asked the disciples who they believed He was. Alluding to many Catholics' ignorance of the Bible, he asked: "Kilala ba niyo si Jesus? Ano ibig sabihin pero sa iyo si Kristo Aquino?"

In one of the anti-pakiusap rites at the 5:00 Evening church, he reminded people to mind their and hygiene whenever they would go to confession: "May mga pumapasok diyan, pahalong Pacher, may kasalanan pa sila.' May mga kabaklo naman kayo! Kaya ang may kasalanan, kami ang tayong pinapaconfess!"

In a mass honoring the mothers/dead of Mary Ireland on New Year's days, Fr. Larry has this to say (in Tagalog) about their good-for-nothing husbands (most parents had): "Hindi niyo ang tayong mga anak. Ako ang tayo! Ang nawa wapo, kaya pagpiyo-pasok niyo yung mga yan!"

Preacher

Asked why he uses such comic spiels in his homilies, Fr. Larry replies: "I would rather talk in a laughing mode since that one who is used to done all this theological orgies and love our souls—and this is one way by which I enjoy more as a priest and preacher."

The conservative may not agree with the style by which Fr. Larry preaches—he uses self-deprecating humor to spice up his homilies. Once, while explaining ancient religious customs related to eating pork, he pantomimed a scene with: "Nung nuon pa ako, nanasahan ako ng nanay ko ang kukita niya akong nuron, Magbiro ka ngat ang baboy-baboy mo!" E, papan po ako noon!"

What's innovative about

Fr. Larry's sermons is: They don't drift away from the message of the day's gospel, so you don't hear him dig up past readings. He does not resort to obscenities to get his message across.

Often described as "show biz" because of his association with famous personalities and his work in the media, the popular priest has been actively involved in social communication—as commentator (for Radio Veritas), columnist, TV host, and professor of theology and communications at the University of Santo Tomas, La Consolacion and Miriam College.

Born Laurentino Balverde Faraon on July 4, 1936 in Binan, Laguna, he took up philosophy and theology at UST, where he earned his Master's degree in religious education (specializing in media). Now on his 25th year as a priest, his ministry has taken him to the US, Israel, Oman, Bahrain, Yemen, Hong Kong, Singapore, Brunei, Indonesia, Guam, United Arab Emirates, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Brunei.

Fr. Larry's hard-hitting columns may sympathize with the cause of the opposition, but we sincerely with the "show biz" piece have revealed a gentle and loving side.

Breath of fresh air

Despite his insistence that he would have been a social activist had he not entered the priesthood, he personifies patience and humility. Indeed, his homilies are a breath of fresh air. He makes churchgoing something to look forward to!

Catch Fr. Larry Faraon as he celebrates mass every first Sunday of each month at Shell's restaurant in Aseo Resort, Quezon City. Email him at larry-faraon@yahoo.com.

FR. FARAON. Uses comic spiels in his homilies.

Robin, AiAi go the caricature route in comic collaboration

PAROLA AND DELAS' ALAS. In your face performers.

By Nestor U. Torre

WHEN WE FIRST HEARD that Robin Padilla and AiAi delas Alas were costarring in the romantic-comedy, "Home Is Where The Heart Is Pik," we wondered how the first-time teamup would turn. Robin is a pure-ma performer who caught it up to most of the part he plays, while AiAi is a comedienne who loves to mug and hams it up to give her fans an extra comedic kick. In the pairing—whether they like it or not—

If Robin and AiAi are unusually in your-face performers separately, what comedic heights—or depths—would they reach together? After viewing "Home Is Where The Heart Is Pik," we can answer: The experience is really much too much.

In Metro Decanter Dick, Robin plays a helpful fireman whose life is saved (via Heimlich maneuver) by waitperson AiAi. Absolutely grateful, Robin swears that he will do anything she wants (for special request makes him both nonsensical, however. She wants to have his baby.

Plot twist

This is supposed to be funny? Or an ostensibly family-friendly movie? How would parents explain the Fanny-pelvic-thrust-and-pilot-mike to their children? This might come overreaching for "humor" really is an outrage ...

The movie's governing performance style takes its cue from its leads' over-hyper characterizations. Most everyone in the movie isn't happy just to play the character assigned to him or her—the performance "has" to be punched up and shot out to the peanut gallery, like the actors were competing in the jumbo Kwala of a Comedy Olympics.

What's the point to this hyper underscoring? It suggests a lack of trust in the ability of the local movie audience to "get" a comedy scene set in its own, without its being "pushed" to excessively silly and obvious proportions.

This "cartoon" style of comedy acting reveals some comedians and filmmakers' inexcusable about the innate appeal and entertainment value of their work. To make up for their limitations, they go the marvelously obvious cartoonist route, and the effect is disgustingly ridiculous.

In the least movie audiences as dense and clueless that it has on her hands to write "comedy" to make it laugh? We don't think so.

In the '50s, local film comedy was less shrill and was more character- and situation-driven—and yet local moviegoers "understood" and loved it.

Cynical view

Has the Filipino moviegoer become more stupid since then? Idle refuse to accept that cynical view. Perhaps, it's our film people whose skills have deteriorated, or some of them have opted to take the easy (buy?) way out.

If so, it's time to change—big-time. Movie ticket prices have increased so much that more viewers now want greater value and originality for their money. Film people who can't measure up will just have to smile for other, more astute—and watch the movie people pass them by.

Make way for Patricia Evangelista, producer

By Rica Arevalo

OVER LUNCH, PATRICIA EVANGELISTA spoke to us even if she was making the post-production of her current "Today" "Storyline," a unique documentary show that started airing on ABC last night.

An accomplished television host and opinion columnist, she is venturing into TV producing. "Early this year, I started producing for ABC, which was looking for a new show that went beyond the usual talk show. So, I pitched 'Storyline,'" she shares.

Another 'truth'

She adds, "I'm a journalist. I know people are dying, disappearing and dealing with corruption. But, we are giving them another 'truth'—that good things can happen, too!"

"Storyline" is loose and promising. It's obvious that the show enjoys creative freedom. Its teams up with "Solidito" Nesto Villabroza, who directs these "vignettes" of the show.

The style of their collaboration: "We complement each other. He narrates are very visual, and so is my writing. The show gives emphasis to storytelling. We allow people to tell their story, but we use the camera and narrative to do this. There's no host. The subject's point of view is the heart of the show!"

"Storyline's" initial telecast featured courageous people "under fire": Sandakan Cabilayan is married to a firefighter who was discouraged before her very eyes. Gerry Ocay of On The Bay Bar Tito couples shared his ups and downs as a businesswoman-firefighter. The firefighters are volunteer firefighters whose selfless gestures to serve others is inspiring.

"It's very different from the public affairs shows you see on television these days. We respect the audience to be inspired and be hopeful," she beams. "Storyline" is shown Fridays on ABC at 6 and 11 p.m., with replays at 8:30 p.m. every Sunday.

EVANGELISTA. Different kinds of public affairs show.

Tinseltown trivia for the uninitiated

By Bobo Cervantes

DID YOU KNOW THAT SOPHIA LOREN WAS born to an unwed mother? Or was torn firstly she was so underweight that she was rushed? The fields she later developed were a modern-day Aphrodite...and one of Europe's greatest film exports?

Did you know that Ginger Rogers, Judy Garland and Elizabeth Taylor had stage mothers who managed their colorful careers?

Did you know that Judy Garland's father was gay?

Alcoholic father

Did you know that Jack Nicholson was raised by his grandmother after his alcoholic father skipped town? On the other hand, we knew that Norma Jean Mortenson—better known as Marilyn Monroe—was left in foster homes by her mentally ill mother. Is this their tragic part of her life was only "unresolved" by her sudden publicity men, who wanted to add pathos to the early life of Hollywood's hot Sirius of the '50s.

Did you know that Mel Gibson is the sixth of 11 children?

Did you know that Anne Bancroft (née Mrs. Robinson) was the original star of "Funny Girl," and she quit for lack of the required vocal range? Her boss was Barbra Streisand's gain!

Did you know that Elvis Presley made 30 films in quick succession during his heyday?

Did you know that two-time Academy Award winners, Spencer Tracy, who effortlessly portrayed priests, lawyers and other men of integrity in his films, was expelled from a eleventh grade school because of "attitude" problem?

Did you know that Mickey Rooney and Judy Garland made what were known as "barnyard musicals" for MGM? The dynamic duo was well-trained to such talent. He was blond, and she was dark haired. He was 5'3", she was 4'11"? They gave new meaning to "small but terrible"! Other small but terrible stars included Alan Ladd, Edward G. Robinson, James Cagney, Gloria Swanson and Vivien Leigh.

Did you know that Ballerina Dean Martin was a heavy before he opted to become a crooner? His comic partner, Jerry Lewis, was expelled from high school for punching the school principal?

Did you know that, upon being introduced to comic Marilyn Monroe on the set of "River of No Return," Robert Mitchum released a loud fart to make the actress relax? But, did you know that he was Deborah Kerr's favorite leading man?

Did you know that Rock Hudson terminated 36 takes to utter his seven-line dialogue, "It's me, you're going to have to get a new bartender"?

Did you know that former child superstar, Shirley Temple, turned 80 last April 23?

BANCROFT. Original star of "Funny Girl."

LOREN. One of Europe's greatest film imports.

PLDT DSL Ultra Broadband Blowout

This offer and hundreds of other top of the line notebooks, PCs and gadgets will be available at ultra low prices. Major credit cards and 0% installment schemes are available.

Complink SM's Jerry Wong with Maricar Jane Corrigiano for PLDT myDSL during the Speed Circuit's 2nd Car Drifting Leg held @ Greenhills last May 31

PLDT myDSL and Complink to offer desktops and laptops at blowout rates at the Ultra Broadband Blowout event at the SM Mall of Asia this Saturday and Sunday

Quintessentially Baleno

ATHLETIC, TALENTED, CHARISMATIC and sexy-actor Christian Vasquez is the quintessential Baleno man. Baleno's latest collection is all about cool comfort, generous fit and styles designed for the men of today.

Made from the finest cotton, Baleno underwear merges classic aesthetics with contemporary functionalities, ranging from basic whites and blacks to fun and funky shades like orange and red. Baleno's easy fit allows you to move untidily and offers easy support for joggers, exercise buffs and cyclists.

Baleno underwear includes sleeveless undershirts, as well as a bikini line to offers a free-to-move panty (with-a-purpose, a full range of underwear for children. As all SM Department Stores and Hypermart is exclusively.

MONTAGE

VASQUEZ (RIGHT). Posters cool comfort and great fit and style.

Aga for Sun Cellular

Aga Muhlach is now Sun Cellular's top celebrity endorser, with his unique combination of talent, looks and charisma complementing Sun's dynamic image. For his part, Aga appreciates Sun because "it achieves our every connected needs everyone in-pretzel to me."

MUHLACH. Dynamic image.

Aga's new TV commercial honors Sun Cellular's most popular permanent: Rapido service, the Sun Call and Text Unlimited 25, which offers unlimited calls and texts for one day for only P25.

'Mariposa,' 'Gusto' extended

The successful revamp of Rica Arevalo's short film, "Dinalo Kita Text" and Will Devlin's "Sa Dapitan ng Mariposa" at Indie Sine has resulted in an additional theatrical run at Robinsons Ermita starting June 4. (The "two-for" movie bill is still ongoing at Trafalgar Robinson's Galleria.) Visit www.indie.ph.

Editor Monina U. Torre
Assistant Editor Rina P. Rulo

SATURDAY Special

Ben Barnes bags plum role in 'Prince Caspian'

BARNES (WITH CASTELLITTO, RIGHT). Makes the big leap from the West End stage to the magical world of Narnia.

WISHING the part is "a dream come true" for the young British thespian.

LOS ANGELES—"THIS IS BEN Barnes. He's playing Prince Caspian. Do not sound within five feet of him, and do not look at him directly in the eye! Thank you."

That was the royal introduction that five got on his first day on the set of "The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian" from EC Independent, the first assistant director.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

EC was just joking, of course. But, to see in some interviews with him in New York, Simi said, "For a couple of days after that, there were still some members going, 'Hello, Mr. Barnes.'" He demonstrated how the crew members' eyes were not downcast as they "nervously" greeted him.

The dark-haired actor seemed with a smile

"They were not quite sure how to treat me, even though I was the guy who said, 'Hi.' The joke set a nice friendly vibe during the filming. Everyone was so welcoming that it set up a lovely atmosphere to work in. If a movie is not fun to do, it's going to show on screen."

Still, Ben admitted that he himself experienced the jitters. "It was my first day on the set, and I was so clearly more nervous than anybody else on the set," said the actor who landed one of the most coveted roles in recent film history—a part in a blockbuster series that already guarantees his inclusion in

More G-2

PLDT myDSL Ultra Broadband Blowout

This offer and hundreds of other top of the line notebooks, PCs and gadgets will be available at ultra low prices. Major credit cards and 0% installment schemes are available.

PLDT myDSL and Villman to offer desktops and laptops at blowout rates at the Ultra Broadband Blowout event at the SM Mall of Asia this Saturday and Sunday

P3.75 ONLY PER MINIPRINT*

Your 4-in-1 4R print gets you four 2"x3" miniprints at P3.75 each.

- KODAK EXTRALIFE Lamination
- Stain resistant
- Waterproof
- Fingerprint proof
- Lasts a lifetime

Kodak Picture Kiosk

Eastwood City

DAUGHTRY
LIVE AT EASTWOOD CITY
June 29, 2008 - 8:00PM

Get your tickets NOW!
Limited seats only!

Eastwood City

UpDharmaDown // Imago // Zelle

May 31, 2008, 8:00 PM
Eastwood Central Plaza
Free Admission

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS

INDIANA JONES
2:40, 5:35, 8:00, 10:40

SEX AND THE CITY
2:20, 5:15, 8:25, 11:10

21
2:10, 5:00, 8:20, 11:00

CAREGIVER
2:30, 5:15, 7:50, 10:40

Tired of going from building to building to distribute your resumés?
We can help you.
JOB

"Will give audiences a JOLT of EXCITEMENT in the same way that seeing Indiana Jones back in action will thrill audiences this summer."
–Phil Contrino / Boxoffice Magazine

"Sex and the City," is the movie that fans are most excited about heading into Hollywood's key summer season.
The May 1, 2008 11:46am EST by Bob Tourtellotte
In the poll of nearly 420,000 respondents, "Sex and the City" proved most exciting to 32 percent of the movie fans, compared with 31 percent for "Indiana Jones," –reported from YAHOO! MOVIES REUTERS

NOW SHOWING
SEX AND THE CITY
Movie soundtrack available from IMX Music.

WIN A FREE TRIP FOR 2 TO NEW YORK CITY!
IF YOU CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF SEX AND THE CITY...
AMERICAN AIRLINES
THE WORLD'S LARGEST AIRLINE
IS TAKING YOU TO THE CITY WHERE IT ALL HAPPENS!
Watch Sex and the City and we'll fly you to New York City, USA.

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE-MART
PROMENADE

AT THE CINEMAS

GLORIETTA 1	1 SEX & THE CITY	2 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	3 CAREGIVER	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL
GLORIETTA 4	1 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	2 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	3 SEX & THE CITY	
GREENBELT 1	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	5 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	6 CAREGIVER	7 21
GREENBELT 3	1 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	2 SEX & THE CITY		
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 SEX & THE CITY	2 21	3 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	4 SEX & THE CITY
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 21	2 CAREGIVER	3 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL
MARKET! MARKET!	1 SEX & THE CITY	2 CAREGIVER	3 21	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL
TRINOMA	1 CAREGIVER	2 21	3 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	4 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL
	5 INDIANA JONES & THE KINGDOM OF THE CRYSTAL SKULL	6 SEX & THE CITY	7 SEX & THE CITY	

AT THE MALLS

Ayala Malls

Glorietta — Francois Fluyshop Workshop; April 2 - June 2, Glorietta Redecorate; For inquiries, pls. call Nina Regacci at 7238515

Greenbelt — MTRO BRAZILIAN Weekends at Greenbelt with entertainment, movies and workshops; May 31, 7 PM, Greenbelt 3, 2nd level

Alabang Town Center — Summer Workshop: Ginger Dance Classes; May 31 – June 1, 3 PM, Sports and Hobbies Facade

Ayala Center Cebu — Food and Shop Promo; May 10-31

Market! Market! — Asian Tropical Living - An Interior Design Exhibit; March - June 08, Home Market, 2nd Level

Cinetag — CINETAGS - The perfect spot for concerts, stageplays & corporate events; is now accepting bookings for May to July 2008; For inquiries & bookings, pls. call 752-7483 or 757-3481

Ayala Museum — Bookings for 30th Century artist Nonoi Flores; May 30 - June 29, 2008; For more information, please call 757-7117 or 21 local 29

Tri Noma — Philippine Star Job Fair; May 30-31, 10 AM - 5 PM, Activity Center

SEX AND THE CITY

SEX AND THE CITY
WEEKEND PICK-A-PRIZE
Watch SEX AND THE CITY
at GLORIETTA 4 CINEMAS
and get a chance to win special
SEX AND THE CITY Premium Items:
Diaries • Vinyl Bags • Mugs • Key Chains
VCD Box Set • Posters
and many more.

NOW SHOWING AT AYALA MALLS CINEMAS

the tasting room

Let appetite satisfy your palate this summer with specially created tasting menus and sampler dishes!

PROMO PERIOD
May 1 - 31, 2008

Glorietta · Greenbelt · Alabang Town Center · Ayala Center Cebu · Trinoma · Tri Noma

Ben Barnes bags plum role . . .

Turn page 41

the next installment, "The Voyage of the Dawn Treader."

He had every reason to be nervous. "These guys have done it a thousand times. Even the four Brevisters (Williams Moseley, Anna Popplewell, Skandar Keynes and Georgie Henley) had been in the first movie, and they knew exactly how it worked. I was coming on the set having no idea what was going on."

William, who plays Peter in the second installment of the adventure-fantasy series directed by Andrew Adamson, made it more memorable for the newcomer. "William has a lot to answer for," Ben shared. "This also happened on my first day on the set. I was having my makeup test. They spent two hours testing different hairstyles, makeup and costumes. I was stumbling finally ready to meet Andrew for the third time. I could see him shaving up in a car.

Makeup artists

"William came up and pretended to squirt orange juice on my face, but he squirted the bottle inadvertently. The juice sprayed all over me and ruined all the work! Everyone's mouths were agape. The makeup artists, hair and costume designers said, 'William, what have you done?' He said, 'Sorry' and ran. I couldn't catch him! He was really fast. There were a lot of shenanigans and tricks played from that moment on."

His pranks were more than worth it for the actor to hear. After all, Ben, who appeared in the award-winning play "The History Boys," is in a romantic series that has earned trillions of dollars in box office earnings worldwide.

He described how he reacted when he got the part: "It was four o'clock in the morning, London time, when they finally made their decision. I was running around the house screaming!"

When he was asked about the peculiar accent he came in the film, the now-smiling, darkly handsome British actor narrated, "I was on the train when I noticed that on the bottom of the audition sheet, it said something like, 'Prince prepares to speak with a Spanish accent.' I went, 'Oh, no!' So, I looked for a couple of DVDs of people speaking English with a Spanish accent. It was hard to find!"

Spanish accent

"I was looking for something with Antonio Banderas," he recalled with a chuckle. "I didn't find any so I ended up watching 'The Princess Bride,' which has actors speaking with an odd Spanish accent." The journalists broke into laughter with him at the thought of Ben riffing a Spanish accent from the 1987 comedy fantasy.

On a roll now, he continued, "When we shot a scene with Sergio Gonzalez, I had this line, 'Why did you kill my father?' I was like, 'Oh, no, it's exactly the same line from 'The Princess Bride!' That is terrible!" At this point, he had his audience of reporters in the palm of his hand with the fabulous combination.

He added, "I worked with a dialect coach to get a Spanish accent, which was subtle enough not to be cheesier, but would fit in with the Spanish actors that Andrew was going to cast.

"But, one week after we started filming, Andrew went, 'I've cast an Italian, a Spaniard, a Mexican and a Flemish guy. They all have different accents.' He told the dialect coach, 'See what you can do to merge the accents, but throw a dagger in there.'"

Told that William had earlier revealed cornering some unusual love triad with half-naked girls, Ben grinned and quipped, "The film has yet to come out, so there are no half-naked pictures yet." He deadpanned: "I will look forward to that!" He volunteered, "But, I'm already getting letters from Japan. The letters always sound sweet, saying something like, 'Love to see you back English.'"

Email rmojdeo_9369@yahoo.com, and read his blog, "The Napalm Papers," on http://blogs.inquirer.net/napalmpapers.

New film throws Paltrow 'a lifeline'

CANNES, FRANCE—AFTER STARTING A family, Gwyneth Paltrow recently returned to the movies in the lush, "Sent Mate," but it is her new movie, "Two Lovers," that fully returned her to the art-form she loves.

The film, which had its world premiere at the Cannes film festival recently, stars Dilmon as a mixed up young woman who wins the love of a complex man, played by Joaquin Phoenix. Its dark, intuitive romance with emotional is subtle.

Perky assistant

Far from the perky assistant, Pepper Potts, in the big-budget Hollywood flick, "Iron Man," Paltrow's role of Michelle in "Two Lovers" fueled the 35-year-old's desire to return to acting.

"It gave to me a lifeline," she told reporters. "I felt like I was free, rare and wise. Going from being a mother at home for a long time, which is the greatest joy of my life, does to feel like an artist again—that was a gift." Reuters

PALTROW: Her role in "Two Lovers" fueled her desire to return to acting.

TAYLOR AND BARRYMORE. First found fame in "Husband Wives" and "E.T. The Extraterrestrial," respectively.

Top child stars of all time

By Nestor G. Torre

SOME US RECESSION-wary magazine shows have been coming up with lists of the top TV-film child stars of all time. Viewers regularly cited include Drew Barrymore, Macauley Culkin and Jodi Foster (minor).

Drew is praised for her sunny, sassy and downright endearing portrayal of the youngest child to the family that "adopted" E.T. in the hit sci-fi film, "E.T., The Extraterrestrial."

Macauley won many hearts as the neglected boy completely with millionaire dad in "Home Alone." And Jodi strained stardom by taking a more serious turn as the boy who sees dead people in "The Sixth Sense."

It's complete the lists, and to make the situation truly "for all time," we'd like to add the following ensemble whose charisma who won countless viewers' hearts worldwide decades before Drew, Jodi and Macauley.

TEMPLE. Screen magnet with dee instinct.

Shirley Temple

The silver screen's youngest with the sunniest could, in fact, sing away with top honors as the most memorable and popular child star of all time. She was so precocious and versatile (she sang, danced and acted like a little pro) that she once became the most popular movie (of whatever age) in Hollywood. She was even awarded a mini Oscar trophy to honor for her her exceptionally talented and winning performances on the silver screen.

After going on to act in some more movie as an adolescent and teenager, Shirley opted to be productive in other fields of entertainment. She even became the US Ambassador to the United Nations.

Elizabeth Taylor

She's still a show biz biz celebrity in her 70s, so her involvement with entertainment has been a lifelong love-hate affair. She began acting as a lovely adolescent in movies like "National Velvet," and her sparkling beauty was truly enthralling to behold on the silver screen.

Later, Liz became one of the most popular young adult stars in Hollywood, and was nominated for her exceptional beauty. Even later, she gained respect as an outstanding actress in movies like "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?," "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof" and "Suddenly Last Summer."

Judy Garland

She was only a few years old when she joined her older sister vaudeville singing act—and it didn't take her long to establish herself as the group's dancing star. After Hollywood beckoned, she starred in musicals like "The Wizard of Oz" and "Babes in Arms," and won great acclaim not just for her unusually rich singing voice, but also for her peppy and yet sensitive portrayals.

However, Judy's fame didn't know true success and had a sad end, because she was pushed to the limit by some of her producers, who made her work as hard as that they even piled her with uppers and downers to maximize her output.

Not surprisingly, Judy became a troubled adult. So did her daughter, Liza Minnelli, who "inherited" not just her mother's talent, but also some of her psychological quirks and eccentricities.

IN THIS ISSUE
One blockbuster after another /A4

SATURDAY Special

Sharon returns with significant portrayal in 'Caregiver'

By Rito P. Asilo

WE CAUGHT THE FIRST screening of Chito Roño's "Caregiver" last Wednesday, and we were pleased to see it pay to almost a full house. Understandably, Sharon Cuneta's fans have waited a long time to see the Megastar grace the big screen again. After all, it's been five years since her last film—Mark Meily's "Crying Ladies"—was released, so it's high time for the moviegoing public to see her in a new project.

With its thematic significance and social relevance, Roño's latest film deserves a hearty pat on the back for boldly tackling subject matter that mirrors the disturbing diaspora among the country's professional sectors—And, what better way to document and spread awareness of this unnerving problem than to have the country's most-loved star take part in a movie that examines issues concerning "forced" migration and massive underemployment?

Promising career

Sharon plays Sarah Gonzales, a grade-school English teacher who's forced to leave behind her son, Paulo (John Wayne Sace)—and a promising career—to follow her husband, Teddy (John Estrada), a registered nurse, to the United Kingdom to work as a caregiver. She is naturally welcomed by fellow "nurses" (as they're called in that part of the globe), Kaine (Dex Quintos), Joseph (Jhong Hilario) and Debbie (Monique Wilson). But, she soon realizes that positions are not necessarily pursuits in the other side of the global fence!

To earn more, she accepts an assignment to take care of Pilliam's Morgan, a very difficult 75-year-old British patient. Embarrassingly as she slowly wins the old man's trust and friendship, her relationship with Teddy deteriorates, especially after she finds out that he is not really employed as a nurse—but merely as a health care assistant.

Things go from bad to worse when Teddy stops reporting for work, takes to the bottle, and starts verbally abusing Sarah and, while she eventually wins over Pilliam's son, Lloyd (Matthew Rutherford), her patient's naughty daughter, Margaret, starts inciting anti-social situations against her. When Teddy packs their bags to return to the Philippines for good, Sarah is torn between giving in to his unreasonable demands or doing what's right for her and her son!

There have been a number of movies about Pinoys trying their luck in foreign lands, but many of them (Chris Lumacad's "Milan," Rory Quintos' "Dubai" and Gil Atienza' "Wishful") tackled the plight of OFWs (pins illegal workers abroad. For a change, Roño's film follows the legal track (save that goes through similar life-changing sacrifices just to make ends meet, like the board exam). Sarah's physician (Albert) who takes a nursing position for a more financially lucrative job.

Horror stories

The horror stories of our OFWs go on and on—although Filipino kids in England suffer through alienation more than kidnapping—but to personal neglect (which makes the situation of Pinoy nannies' character implausible).

It's great to see Sharon—who delivers a heartfelt and moving performance—on the big screen again, although her English (which vacillates between American and neutral English accents) is too polished to be believable for her character. Still, her Gramaxan commercials (which Roño directs) are more hilarious than her dramatic moments.

It's great to see Sharon—who delivers a heartfelt and moving performance—on the big screen again, although her English (which vacillates between American and neutral English accents) is too polished to be believable for her character. Still, her Gramaxan commercials (which Roño directs) are more hilarious than her dramatic moments.

Estrada also comes on strong as a man who can't seem to stay employed.

Wilson, who snagged an Asian Film Supporting Actress trophy in 2004 for her performance in Roño's "Sana sa Huli," plays Sarah's hardnosing counselor, but her curt and feisty turn is too short to be enjoyed (she had to fly in the US to perform for the Vilar show during "Caregiver's" three-week UK shoot)—and that's a pity.

The movie is not without flaws: It starts out terribly, but halfway through, it loses its relentless focus when overwhelming melodrama and the soundtrack's star-jolting music threaten to drown out the exposition.

Quibbles notwithstanding, Sharon's comeback film deserves to be seen for its thematic significance and fine cinematic turns. Let's hope it won't take Sharon another five years before we see her again on the silver screen!

CUNETA. Five-film in five years.

movietime

SM CINEMA

visit www.smcinema.com • powered by jetsetg.com

METRO MANILA

IMAX

SPEED RACER

DEEP SEA

T-REX

THE PODIUM

CAREGIVER

SEX & THE CITY

CINEMA 1

HANNAH MONTANA & MILEY CYRUS 3D Concert

SEX AND THE CITY

REVENGE

SOON TO OPEN

LUZON

SOON TO OPEN

VISAYAS • MINDANAO

'21' plays by the numbers

STUNNESS. Cast as math genius who gambles "scientifically."

By Nestor Torre

"21," A MOVIE ABOUT COLLEGE KIDS who take to counting from casinos for figuring out a way to beat the system, is more entertaining to watch when you've only got half your brain turned on.

However, if you've gone through the trouble of finding out what the movie's about before going to the ticket booth, you're probably going to watch it for the cinema with some expectations. After all, "21" is a movie about smart people who are made to beat the supposedly unbeatable casinos at their own game. So, it's not unreasonable to expect the film to be smart, as well.

Predictable

But, while the movie is easy to watch—it's paced briskly, has engaging leads and a glossy, finished feel—it doesn't offer much that's new. The plot is predictable, the characters are generally one-dimensional, and the glitzy details, which could have been the movie's saving grace, are lost.

It's a shame, really, since the tale itself is interesting. The film is loosely based on the book, "Bringing Down the House: The Inside Story of the MIT Students Who Took Vegas for Millions," by Ben Mezrich. Touted as non-fiction by its author, some facts had once in the book have turned out to be not so factual, and, apparently, several scenes didn't happen at all.

At least, this much is true: There was indeed a group of card counters—students and alumni of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University—who, employing a team concept, secret signs and other strategies to beat casinos at blackjack, not just in Vegas, but throughout the world.

Card counting, which is a strategy that skilled players use to determine whether they have a probability advantage, is completely legal. It's all down to the hand, after all. Casinos don't like it, unsurprisingly enough, and tend to get aggressive when they find out about it. However, audiences won't come away with mind-numbing tips after they watch the movie, so casinos have nothing to worry about.

Though the movie does go into detail regarding the system (and, it does away from a more in-depth view: It's a bit strange, actually since it's the story's raison d'être. Director Robert Luketic ("Legally Blonde") and scriptwriters, Peter Steinfeld and Allan Loeb, probably thought the math would have audiences...lose in math, do you? Hollywood devotes they need to put the film with no more mind-boggling.

Medical school

The film has a conventionally structured plot: A brilliant student (Jim Sturgess, earlier seen in "The Other Boleyn Girl" and "Across the Universe") who initially just wants to earn enough money for medical school, joins a team of card-counters headed by a professor (Kevin Spacey being Kevin Spacey).

He is seduced by the big wins and bright lights of Vegas, abandons his friends, is betrayed by the snarky professor, runs afoul of the enforcer (represented by Laurence Fishburne, having still-school watch his fists), reinvents himself and makes up with his friends.

It's a sequence of events we've seen many times before, and everything—including the love interests (a dry Kate Bosworth)—is so predictable it would have been completely embarrassing if not for Sturgess' unexpectedly nuanced performance. It's one of the few surprises in a movie that could have been outstanding, but in contrast to be just average.

To give or not to give

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

TO GIVE OR NOT TO GIVE, THAT IS THE question. People like giving gifts, but sometimes, they have their recipients. Here are some concerns of parents who have gifted their children with cell phones:

"Cell phones enable kids to loosen the Internet without restrictions. My kid started visiting porn sites using his phone. Restricted images will linger with him for the rest of his life, and I am to blame for allowing him access to such a world!"

Family life

"When I gave my daughter a cell phone, she started staying a boy she liked. They communicated behind my back, and after a few months, they eloped. These gadgets invade into our family life. In the past, men would ask permission to visit our daughters. Today, boys don't want anything to do with the parents of girls they like, and mobile phones allow them to go directly to their targets."

"Cell phones are a distraction to people who are studying or working. My kid goes on buzzword with texting and non-stop calls at all hours of the day. It has become a constant distraction. Initially, it was a way for me to get in touch with her, but now, it's even harder to get through to her. She's in touch with everyone else but me!"

The parents who shared their stories took back the cell phones they gave their kids. They reasoned: "It's not worth the risk!"

Bonding with Burgy and Miggy

MIGUEL CARLO AVTONA III NEO GRIMALDI, 12-year-old Miggy refers as to running seventh grade student at La Salle Greenhills, is the only son of Clarence and Dorothy Avtona. He excels at both sports and academics.

"I enjoy studying, but I also love playing basketball," shares Miggy, who is the point

STREET SMART

Mandy Navarro

AVTONA (WITH BURGY, RIGHT). Excels at academics and sports.

guard of Barangay Toll QC in the 58th year of Burlington-Batang PBA Summer Basketball League. He enjoys the distinction of being the only player to participate in three successive Burlington courses so far (boys 9 to 12 years old).

"We started in the league as a 13-year-old rookie. He is now one of the reliable players of coach Mark Herrera," states his dad, who accompanies the scrapper in games and practices.

Discipline

Together with Burgy, Burlington scales' mascot, Miggy is encouraging kids to take up at least one sport, because it teaches discipline, patience and hard work.

The Burlington management, InCity Press Tim, believes that those are the core values needed by the youth to succeed in life.

E-mail mandymavarro@yahoo.com, or call 899-1767

Televiewers face limited fare as networks flounder for ideas

NEW YORK—JIMMY KIMMEL knows how to deliver an industry joke with some zing, as he proved to ad vertisers getting a first look at the ABC television network's fall schedule last week. "There at ABC, we're very excited about both of our new shows," Kimmel said to knowing laughs.

Both, that is, is game shows, produced by Ashton Kutcher, the other an adaptation of a series done by the BBC. It's hardly a boast of creativity from a network that proudly introduced eight new series last fall.

Writers' strike

The fall schedule, rolled out with limited fanfare, provided evidence of how deeply network television was hurt by the writers' strike. The pain from those wounds will linger into next season when the networks—already losing viewership—can least afford it.

Premiere time in September was once like a week of Christmas mornings for TV fans, but it's steadily becoming a late spring ritual. "Viewers are getting antsy for the summer, and the networks can't just presume that they're coming back," mused Jamal Mirmecli, a veteran television critic who operates TVWeek-Watching.com.

Judging by what he's seen, Mirmecli said he's looking forward only to two new series next season—both on Fox and one not debuting until January 2009.

ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox and the CW have collectively premiered 36 new shows in the fall. Last season, those five networks debuted 27. Take CBS and the CW. The decline is 10-to-eight.

Formats

The "new" line includes remakes of "Beverly Hills 90210" (on the CW) and "Knight Rider" (on NBC). There are a handful of inherited hours. Fox has three already successful shows in the world (including CBS' "The Ex List," from Israel, and NBC's "Kath & Kim," from Australia). There are big name producers (a million from past seasons: Lhotsky Shankbone, David E. Kelley, J.J. Abrams).

Fantasy continues to be hot, too, and several series require a willing suspension of disbelief. ABC expects you to follow a detective transported to the 1970s by a car crash; over on CBS, a woman turns her life upside down because of a psychic's prediction.

Television's executives have always been shy about seeking bold new ideas, and this year "people are hedging their bets a little more," Mirmecli observed.

Gothic thriller

CBS is particularly conservative, especially since the network took real chances last year with a trampy and gothic thriller that failed to last.

The strike led during the networks' development season, when ideas are hatched. ABC and Fox executives both admitted they really hurt, and haven't rebuilds.

While its rivals scrambled across town only on swipes or a quick 20-minute film shoot on idea, it was a route NBC entertainment president Stephen McPherson refused to follow.

He won't commit to a series, unless episodes have been cast and written, and a pilot is filmed. He likened it to the filmmaker not building passenger cars until

"DESPERATE HOUSEWIVES." The breakout success of 2004.

NEW cast of "Beverly Hills 90210."

"KNIGHT RIDER." Returns with a new hero.

deals is all you need. Smoke another CD's scan spent much of the strike looking at programs from around the world for ideas—something they have rarely done.

Kevin Reilly, Fox entertainment president, said that some ideas Fox didn't have time to develop last season will be pushed to a year, giving the network a leg up on the 2009-10 season.

Launching pad

That doesn't help much for September 2008, however. The opening of a fall season has been slowly declining in importance, anyway, as a launching pad for new programs. "Desperate Housewives" and "Lost" proved in 2004 it can be done—but no comparable hits have started in the fall since then.

Three of the five most popular shows last week—"American Idol," "Dancing With the Stars" and "Grey's Anatomy"—each started in another season.

Executives are concerned that it's too easy for a new show to get lost in September, when there are many other choices. Fans will still assiduously note episodes of existing series when they start up in the fall, but it's becoming less of an event. AP

CINEMA ACCESS 633-5555

MOVIEWORLD

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMA MOVIE GUIDE

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

GALLERIA

1 INDIANA JONES
2 CARE GIVER
3 INDIANA JONES
4 21
5 SEX AND THE CITY
6 CARE GIVER
7 INDIANA JONES
8 IndiaTone: Sa Pagtapo ng Ikaapatnga
9 IRON MAN
10 INDIANA JONES I BOY CULTURE

ATTENTION
High School and College Students
UNLEASH YOUR CREATIVITY
in FILM making
Join the Mov Short Film Competition
Deadline of submission of Movie: Aug. 27, 2008
For details:

ERMITA

1 INDIANA JONES
2 SEX AND THE CITY
3 CARE GIVER
4 IRON MAN
5 CARE GIVER
6 INDIANA JONES
7 21
8 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS
INDIANA JONES
9 BAHA PA RIN / INDIANA JONES

METRO EAST

1 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS / INDIANA JONES
2 CARE GIVER
3 CARE GIVER
4 SEX AND THE CITY
5 IRON MAN
6 INDIANA JONES
7 INDIANA JONES
8 21

NOVALICHES

1 CARE GIVER
2 INDIANA JONES
3 21
4 IRON MAN

PIONEER

1 21
2 INDIANA JONES
3 CARE GIVER
4 SEX AND THE CITY

Watch LIVE via SATELLITE
MOVIEWORLD
GALLERIA • MANILA • METRO EAST
TICKET PRICE: P550.00
IMUS • BACOLOD
STARMILLS, PAMPANGA
TICKET PRICE: P500.00
Tickets are available at the ticket booth
FREE KNOCK OUT MEAL
for every ticket purchased

STA. ROSA

1 INDIANA JONES
2 21
3 THE POSSESSED
4 CARE GIVER

LIPA

1 INDIANA JONES
2 CARE GIVER
3 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS
4 CARE GIVER / IRON MAN

DASMARINAS

1 THE POSSESSED
2 INDIANA JONES
3 21
4 CARE GIVER

IMUS

1 CARE GIVER
2 IRON MAN
3 INDIANA JONES
4 21

ANGELES

1 INDIANA JONES
2 CARE GIVER
3 ASYLUM
4 21

STARMILLS

1 21
2 CARE GIVER
3 MEGA SHAKE
4 BAHA PA RIN / INDIANA JONES
5 CARE GIVER
6 INDIANA JONES

BACOLOD

1 CARE GIVER
2 INDIANA JONES
3 WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS / CARE GIVER
4 21
5 ASYLUM
6 THE SAVAGES

ILOILO

1 INDIANA JONES
2 CARE GIVER
3 IRON MAN / CARE GIVER
4 21
5 PATHOLOGY
6 NEVER BACK DOWN

Araneta Center
Gateway
Ali Mall
Cubao Expo
Araneta Coliseum

EXPERIENCE THE DIFFERENCE

INDIANA JONES
CARE GIVER
INDIANA JONES
SEX AND THE CITY
21
WHAT HAPPENS IN VEGAS
IRON MAN

FULL STADIUM SEATING

ARANETA CENTER EVENTS

SALE
UP TO 70% OFF
MAY 30 - JUNE 8

Gateway
AFTER HOURS
TONIGHT
GATEWAY NORTH DRIVEWAY
JOIN THE DJS | STONEFREE
JUAN PABLO DRAW
FREE ENTRANCE
GATES OPEN 7PM

STRIDE: Sings and dances in the film version of stage musical, "Mamma Mia."

One blockbuster after another

By Nestor U. Torre

THREE PART TWO MONTHS, MOVIEGOERS have been laughing all the way to the bank, because some of their new movies have been making big waves—and bucks—at the tills. Just a few weeks ago, "Iron Man" ranked the box office with its record-breaking debut—and has already made more than $400 million worldwide!

Not to be outdone, "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," has also broken the Hollywood bank with its unusually strong opening weekend.

Achievement

The sequel's overwhelming success has boosted the career of its "signature" lead, Harrison Ford. This is an unusually strong comeback for an actor who's already in his late 60s, and Ford should be very proud of his achievement.

SMITH: Plays a superhero in "Hancock."

Ford's young costar, Shia LaBeouf, also benefits greatly from the sequel's great success at the box office, if not in some critics' estimation.

Advance word is similarly hyper-excited over the opening of the much-anticipated film version of the hit TV series, "Sex and the City." Its extended audience is not as wide as the two films we've already cited, but here, given its heavy "sexy" quotient, fan, we can also expect it to prove in the mega-millions because—well, because "Sex" sells.

After that, other potential blockbusters are poised to also make it big at the tills, like "The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian." The sequel has already opened big abroad, with spectacular grosses and favorable reviews, which now has enthusiastic sets for its final battle, which is rumored to be too long for cinematic comfort.

Then, there's "Hancock." Will Smith's latest stellar actioner. Smith's past movies have set records for top summer blockbusters, and it's expected that his latest answer will also do spectacularly well.

For our part, we're looking forward with extra excitement to seeing Meryl Streep sing and dance in the film version of the hit stage musical, "Mamma Mia," which showcases the songs of Abba.

Absent father

The film also stars Pierce Brosnan as one of the three men "suspected" of fathering Meryl's daughter, who's now also-headed, and needs her heretofore absent father to give her away to her intended husband.

After that? Who's next?

"Kung Fu Panda" is an animated feature that combines audio-animation. It joins with martial arts wizardry.

"Get Smart." Some of Steve Carell's recent starring turns don't bode all that well at the tills, but it's felt that the popularity of the "Get Smart" "dumb detective" comedy series in the '60s will heighten its first movie version's chances of hitting it big at the box office. Anne Hathaway and Dwayne Johnson also star.

"The Dark Knight." Aside from the instant appeal of this new Batman series adventure, it's a must see in some film buffs' books because it features the last performance of Heath Ledger, as the Caped Crusader's spaced-out nemesis. The Joker. Christian Bale plays Batman.

"The Happening." Mark Wahlberg has chalked up more than his share of hits, and director M. Night Shyamalan is a past master at spooking movie audiences. So, this film about us-nuts event that threatens the survival of mankind could end up as a blockbuster in its own right!

CAMEL: Typhlis screen version of "Get Smart."